The children, at least the boys, played about and did as 105
they pleased. Not so with the girls. Their duties began 512
at a very early age. They carried wood and water for their 857
mothers, sewed moccasins, and as soon as they were strong 562
enough, were taught to tan robes and furs, make lodges,
travois, and do all other woman's — and so menial — work. 868
The boys played at mimic warfare, hunted around in the [462]
brush with their bows and arrows, made mud images of
animals, and in summer spent about half their time in the
water. In winter, they spun tops on the ice, slid down hill
on a contrivance made of buffalo ribs, and hunted rabbits.

Shortly after noon, the hunters began to return, bringing 105
in deer, antelope, buffalo, elk, occasionally bear, and, some- 512
times, beaver which they had trapped. The camp began to [224]
be more lively. In all directions persons could be heard
shouting out invitations to feasts. Here a man was lying
back on his couch singing and drumming; there a group of
young men were holding a war dance; everywhere the
people were eating, singing, talking, and joking. As the
light faded from the western sky and darkness spread over
the camp, the noise and laughter increased. In many [535]
lodges, the people held social dances, the women, dressed in [533]
their best gowns, ranged on one side, the men on the other;
all sung, and three or four drummers furnished an accompaniment; the music was lively if somewhat jerky. At
intervals the people rose and danced, the "step" being
a bending of the knees and swinging of the body, the
women holding their arms and hands in various graceful
positions.

With the night came the rehearsal of the wondrous doings 105
of the gods. These tales may not be told in the daytime. 512
Old Man would not like that, and would cause any one who 537
narrated them while it was light to become blind. All 538
Indians are natural orators, but some far exceed others in [784]
their powers of expression. Their attitudes, gestures, and
signs are so suggestive that they alone would enable one to

logs or brush,—anything in fact to make a close, high barrier. 224
In some places the enclosure might be only a fence of brush, but even here the buffalo did not break it down, for they did not push against it, but ran round and round within, looking for a clear space through which they might pass. From the top of the bluff, directly over the pis'kun, two long lines of rock piles and brush extended far out on the prairie, ever diverging from each other like the arms of the letter V, the opening over the pis'kun being at the angle.

In the evening of the day preceding a drive of buffalo [756]
into the pis'kun a medicine man, usually one who was the
possessor of a buffalo rock, In-is'-kim, unrolled his pipe, and [782]
prayed to the Sun for success. Next morning the man who [778]
was to call the buffalo arose very early, and told his wives
that they must not leave the lodge, nor even look out, until [784] ●
he returned; that they should keep burning sweet grass, [782]
and should pray to the Sun for his success and safety. Without
eating or drinking, he then went up on the prairie, and
the people followed him, and concealed themselves behind
the rocks and bushes which formed the V, or chute. The [292]
medicine man put on a head-dress made of the head of a buffalo, and a robe, and then started out to approach the animals. When he had come near to the herd, he moved about until he had attracted the attention of some of the buffalo, and when they began to look at him, he walked slowly away toward the entrance of the chute. Usually the buffalo followed, and, as they did so, he gradually increased his pace. The buffalo followed more rapidly, and the man continually went a little faster. Finally, when the buffalo were fairly within the chute, the people began to rise up from behind the rock piles which the herd had passed, and to shout and wave their robes. This frightened the hindermost buffalo, which pushed forward on the others, and before long the whole herd was running at headlong speed toward the precipice, the rock piles directing them to the

fer in certain particulars, especially in the explanations of certain features of the ceremony.

Wolf Calf's account of this ceremony is as follows: — [115]

"A man who started out to catch eagles moved his lodge and his family away from the main camp, to some place where the birds were abundant. A spot was chosen on top of a mound or butte within a few miles of his lodge, and here he dug a pit in the ground as long as his body and somewhat deeper. The earth removed was carried away to a distance, and scattered about so as to make no show. When the pit had been made large enough, it was roofed over with small willow sticks, on which grass was scattered, and over the grass a little earth and stones were laid, so as to give the place a natural look, like the prairie all about it.

"The bait was a piece of bloody neck of a buffalo. This, of course, could be seen a long way off, and by the meat a stuffed wolf skin was often placed, standing up, as if the animal were eating. To the piece of neck was tied a rope, which passed down through the roof of the pit and was held in the watcher's hand.

"After all had been made ready, the next day the man [782]
rose very early, before it was light, and, after smoking and
praying, left his camp, telling his wives and children not to [784]
use an awl while he was gone. He endeavored to reach the [769]
pit early in the morning, before it became light, and lay down
in it, taking with him a slender stick about six feet long, a [789]
human skull, and a little pemmican. Then he waited.

"When the morning came, and the eagles were flying, one of them would see the meat and descend to take it away from the wolf. Finding it held fast by the rope, the bird began to feed on it; and while it was pecking at the bait, the watcher seized it by the legs, and drew it into the pit, where he killed it, either by twisting its neck, or by crushing it with his knees. Then he laid it to one side, first opening [789]

223 the bill and putting a little piece of pemmican in its mouth.
[789] This was done to make the other eagles hungry. While he was in the pit, the man neither ate, drank, nor slept. He had a sleeping-place not far off, to which he repaired each night after dark, and there he ate and drank.

[769] "The reason for taking the skull into the hole with the catcher was, in part, for his protection. It was believed
[751] that the ghost of the person to whom the skull had belonged would protect the watcher against harm from the eagle, and besides that, the skull, or ghost, would make the watcher invisible, like a ghost. The eagle would not see him.

"The stick was used to poke or drive away smaller birds, such as magpies, crows, and ravens, which might alight on the roof of the pit, and try to feed on the bait. It was used, also, to drive away the white-headed eagle, which they did not care to catch. These are powerful birds; they could almost kill a person.

784 "There are two sacred things connected with the catch-
223 ing of eagles, — two things which must be observed if the eagle-catcher is to have good luck. The man who is watching must not eat rosebuds. If he does, the eagle, when he comes down and alights by the bait, will begin to scratch himself and will not attack the bait. The rosebuds will make him itch. Neither the man nor his wife must use an awl while he is absent from his lodge, and is trying to catch
[751] the birds. If this is done, the eagles will scratch the catcher. Sometimes one man would catch a great many eagles."

223 In his day, John Monroe was a famous eagle-catcher, and
[115] he has given me the following account of the method as he has practised it. The pit is dug, six feet long, three wide, and four deep, on top of the highest knoll that can be found near a stream. The earth taken out is carried a long way off. Over the pit they put two long poles, one on each side, running lengthwise of the pit, and other smaller sticks are laid across, resting on the poles. The smaller sticks are

When they reach the patch, if the crop is good, every one is 249
glad. After the gathering, they all move away again after the 796
buffalo.

Sometimes a man who was lazy, and had planted no to- 249
bacco, would go secretly to the patch, and pull a number of 685
plants belonging to some one else, and hide them for his own
use. Now, in these prayers that they offer, they do not ask [796]
for mercy for thieves. A man who had thus taken what did
not belong to him would have a lizard appear to him in a [784] ●
dream, and then he would fall sick and die. The medicine [787]
men would know of all this, but they would not do anything.
They would just let him die.

This tobacco was given us by the one who made us. 276 [824]

The Blackfoot cosmology is imperfect and vague, and I 772
have been able to obtain nothing like a complete account of
it, for I have found no one who appeared to know the story
of the beginning of all things.

Some of the Blackfeet now say that originally there was a 539
great womb, in which were conceived the progenitors of all 773
animals now on earth. Among these was Old Man. As the
time for their birth drew near, the animals used to quarrel
as to which should be the first to be born, and one day,
in a fierce struggle about this, the womb burst, and Old Man
jumped first to the ground. For this reason, he named all
the animals Nis-kum'-iks, Young Brothers; and they, because
he was the first-born, called him Old Man.

There are several different accounts of the creation of the 773
people by Old Man. One is that he married a female dog,
and that their progeny were the first people. Others, and
the ones most often told, have been given in the Old Man
stories already related.

There is an account of the creation which is essentially [171]
an Algonquin myth, and is told by most of the tribes of this
stock from the Atlantic to the Rocky Mountains, though the
hero is variously named.

At night they were suspended within, above the owners' seat. 276
It was said that if at any time a person should walk com- 778
pletely around the lodge of a medicine man, some bad luck [784]
would befall him. Inside the lodge, no one was allowed to
pass between the fireplace and the pipe stem. No one but [756]
a medicine man and his head wife could move or unroll the
bundle. The man and his wife were obliged always to keep [386]
their faces, hands, and clothing painted with *nits'-i-san*, a
dull red paint, made by burning a certain clay found in the
bad lands.

The *Ni-namp'-skan* appears to be a priest of the Sun, and 756
prayers offered through him are thought to be specially
favored. So the sacred stem is frequently unrolled for the [755]
benefit of the sick, for those who are about to undertake a
dangerous expedition, such as a party departing to war, for [782]
prayers for the general health and prosperity of the people,
and for a bountiful supply of food. At the present time [178]
these ancient ceremonies have largely fallen into disuse. In
fact, since the disappearance of the buffalo, most of the old
customs are dying out.

The thunder is believed to bring the rain in spring, and 796
the rain makes the berries grow. It is a rule that after the 756
first thunder is heard in the spring, every medicine man
must give a feast and offer prayers for a large berry crop. I [821]
have never seen this ceremony, but Mr. Schultz was once [115]
permitted to attend one, and has given me the following
account of it. He said: "When I entered the lodge with the other guests, the pipe stem had already been unrolled. Before the fire were two huge kettles of cooked sarvis berries, a large bowlful of which was soon set before each guest. Each one, before eating, took a few of the berries and rubbed them into the ground, saying, 'Take pity on us, all Above People, and give us good.'

"When all had finished eating, a large black stone pipe [782]
bowl was filled and fitted to the medicine stem, and the

point here is that these powers and their symbols were subject to the same controls
as any other property. A man, therefore, incurred both rights and obligations with 778
the attainment of power. He was expected to be generous with it, but at the same 421
time he expected to be paid in goods or prestige for the help he gave.

The Blackfeet believed that the possession of a guardian spirit and power 778
were important for success, so such powers and the bundles that represented them
were highly valued. Not all men were successful in their vision quest, but this was 554
not held against them. They were just unlucky. Neither they nor anyone else
expected much of them, however, and they could hardly advance in prestige without
some successes. Such men might be motivated to gain property to enable them to
purchase power from someone who had had the experience, and men with power
often sought to transfer it because it was a restricted and often burdensome property.
As with other kinds of property, the bundle owner was expected to be 778
generous with his power. Bundles had to be opened periodically, and the owner had
to provide a feast for invited guests as a part of the ritual. In addition, the bundle [574]
owner had to observe a number of taboos associated with each bundle—it had to [784]
be displayed properly, no one should walk between the bundle and its owner, and
numerous restrictions were put on the owner's behavior. Some men owned several
bundles, but whether one or many, some owners found the responsibilities, expenses
and taboos too burdensome and sought buyers for their power.

Values and Status

Perhaps, as already indicated, one of the most persistent themes of Black- 554
feet life was the high value put on individual prestige, a value that operated
through and maintained a status structure. This was not a true class society with 183
easily recognized social divisions, but a structure of status positions, each shading
into a higher one. The high status people were distinguished readily from those
of low status, but the separations along the line might be imperceptible.[*] The
whole system was an expression of Blackfeet values, and the highest status was
achieved by the man who best represented these ideals.

The major characteristics valued by the Blackfeet and by which men were
judged appear to have been bravery, generosity, wisdom, and skill; these were dis- [555]
played in warfare, horse raiding, hunting, religious knowledge and the acquisition [556]
of property for use in the service of others.

It is difficult to establish a hierarchy of the importance of these different 555
attributes. Bravery and generosity appear to have been essential. The ethnographers
differ in their ordering of exploits by which a reputation for bravery was estab- 183
lished, but all agree that war honors were ranked, and that the killing and scalping
of an enemy ranked below the more dangerous feats of successfully wresting the
weapons from an enemy and escaping without injury, or stealing into the center

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[*] Ewers believes that social classes were forming in the late 1880s under the influence
of horse ownership. A small rich class, a numerous middle class, and a number of poor [565]
were recognized, grounded in respect for individual rights and property rights (Ewers
1955:240–244).

778 425 and offered him a pipe and the promise of horses and other valuables in exchange for his power. Should the owner not wish to part with his sacred possession, or should he feel the offer too small, he refused the pipe. If he accepted the pipe, he agreed to the transfer.

Although the details of transfer rituals differed with particular medicine bundles, the ceremonies associated with the transfer of the more important bundles had a number of general features 783 in common. Before the formal transfer, the petitioner and bundle owner purified themselves by taking a sweat bath together. The two men, both naked, entered a sweat lodge, which was a temporary structure composed of a framework of arched willows covered with buffalo robes. Attendants heated stones in a near-by fire and placed them inside the sweat lodge. The two bathers sprinkled water on the hot stones, producing a steam which caused them to perspire freely in the little enclosure. Meanwhile, they sang and prayed. At the conclusion of this purification rite they ran to the cool waters of a near-by lake or stream.

778 425 The bundle transfer took place inside the owner's tipi. His wife assisted him in the ritual of transfer. Usually a smudge of sweet-smelling grass or other fragrant plant was made on an 796 earth altar in front of the owner's seat. He opened the ceremony by narrating in detail the story of the origin of the bundle. Then, very slowly and deliberately, often making three feints toward an object before touching it, he proceeded to open the sacred bundle. He untied the knots in the rawhide cords surrounding the bundle, unwrapped the outer covering of skin and the inner ones of trade cloth, and reverently picked up each of the sacred articles in the bundle. He accompanied his actions with prayers and songs, singing a different song for each article handled. Smoking a pipe, dancing, and painting the face of the bundle purchaser were also parts of the ritual of transfer of the more important bundles. Many hours were required to transfer a complex bundle.

The purchaser watched and listened intently, for he had to 784 learn every detail of the bundle ritual. He also had to learn

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the taboos associated with the care of the bundle. Most bundles 784
had to be hung on tripods behind the owner's lodge during the
day and brought inside at night. Other taboos were more varied. 778
The owner of a medicine pipe bundle must not let anyone pass in front of him when camp was moved. A beaver bundle owner dared not show fear of water in any form. The owner of a snake-painted tipi must not break a bone in his lodge.

Frequent transfer of medicine bundles was encouraged by the 778
Blackfoot belief that having owned important bundles added to
a man's prestige and social position. Men of distinction were 554
proud to recount the various bundles they had possessed during their lifetime, just as they were proud to tell of their brave deeds in war. Everyone knew that purchase of an important bundle required sacrifice of considerable property and that learning the ritual of the bundle was an intellectual accomplishment.

Many articles associated with successful achievements in war 778
came to be regarded as medicine bundles. Among them were
headdresses, shirts, shields, knives, and lances. These more important 714
war medicines were usually the property of the well-to-do members of the tribe.[1]

The most common of the more important classes of medicine 778
bundles were the painted lodges. There were more than fifty of
them among the three Blackfoot tribes. The handsomely painted 532
lodge cover was not a sacred entity in itself. Rather it was part 342
of a complex of sacred objects received by its original owner in his dream of power.

According to Piegan tradition some of the oldest painted
lodges are the bear ones. Their origin is explained in the following 539
legend: Long ago a young Piegan determined to obtain some
secret power which would bring him success in war. While traveling 778
through heavy timber in search of a fasting place, he came 532
upon a cave. He entered it. When his eyes became accustomed 342
to the darkness he saw the cave was occupied by a mother bear 773
and her cubs. When he pleaded with the bear mother not to
harm him, she quieted down and even let him fondle her cubs.

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[1] War medicines are described on pages 127–28 of this book.

541 season. Lazy Boy claimed the Piegan began racing horses in his
great-grandfather's time, soon after they acquired their first horses.

175 The earliest description of a Blackfoot horse race refers to one held
in the combined Blackfoot, Blood, Piegan, Sarsi, and Gros Ventres
541 camp, seen by Paul Kane on June 1, 1848 (Kane, 1925, pp. 295–296).
Kane's painting of that race, now in the Royal Ontario Museum of Archeology, is reproduced as plate 13, *b*.[A] The trader William T. Hamilton briefly described a match race between horses of the Crow and Piegan witnessed by him in 1858 (Hamilton, 1900, pp. 66–68). J. Willard Schultz described a match race between horses owned by Piegan and Kutenai ca. 1878 (Schultz, 1907, pp. 134–136). These descriptions are exceedingly fragmentary compared with the wealth of detailed information on old-time Blackfoot horse racing supplied by my informants.

RACE HORSES

231 A winning race horse was the most valuable horse a Blackfoot
Indian could own. In trade a fast race horse would bring several other
541 good horses. Nearly all racers were males, either stallions or geldings.
Because courses were generally long, horses were not raced until their third or fourth year. Racers were considered in their prime from their fourth to ninth year. After that they would serve as buffalo runners for a number of years. The ideal race horse was an animal of small size and unprepossessing appearance, whose speed and endurance belied its looks. Indians liked to match a horse of this description, whose ability was not generally known, against a large, finer appearing animal, in the hope of encouraging their rivals to bet heavily and to win large stakes for themselves.

Men carefully watched boys riding year-old colts chasing buffalo calves. If they saw a colt that seemed to outdistance the others they examined it carefully. If they thought it had possibilities of becoming a good racer they trained it until it was ready to race at 3 or 4 years.
The potential racer was allowed to run with the range herd much of
● [784] the time. It was not used for general riding or packing. There was a
decided taboo against packing meat or getting blood on a race horse.

INTRATRIBAL AND INTERTRIBAL HORSE RACES

541 Although the Blackfoot participated in both intratribal and inter-
[648] tribal horse races in buffalo days those races best remembered, and
probably most common, were the ones between two societies of the
[575] same tribe. Generally men of the same society did not race against
each other, even though several men of a society might own fast horses.
[628] Intertribal races were held between the Blackfoot tribes (such as
Piegan contra Blood), or between the fastest Blackfoot-owned racer
[648] and the swiftest horse owned by a neighboring non-Blackfoot tribe.

[A] [See category 541, p. 358-L--Analyst]

THE HORSE IN RELIGION

THE HORSE MEDICINE CULT

Horse medicine (ponokâmita saám) was and still is considered the 778
most secret and one of the most powerful medicines of the Blackfoot.
Wissler (1912 a, pp. 107–111) included a brief description of horse
medicine and its uses in his study of Blackfoot ceremonial bundles.
That description was based upon information obtained from the aged
Piegan, Red Plume, by D. C. Duvall, Wissler's mixblood assistant.
All my older informants had great respect for the power of horse
medicine. Some of them were afraid to discuss it. One man claimed 778
that if he were to talk of horse medicine he would become paralyzed.
Another said if he told me what he knew of horse medicine harm 784
surely would come to both of us. Nevertheless eight of my older informants, including both Piegan and Blood Indians, were willing to
discuss this subject with me. In addition, Wallace Night Gun, leader 115
of the horse medicine cult on the Blackfeet Reservation, Mont., during
the 1940's, proved a willing and exceedingly helpful informant. His
portrait appears on plate 15, 4.A Wallace Night Gun died in the fall
of 1950, aged ca. 78 years. In December of that year his horse medi- 126
cine bundle was purchased by the Smithsonian Institution. It is
catalog No. 387744 in the United States National Museum collections. 113

Wissler (1912 a, p. 110) was informed that there were "less than
twenty horse medicine men." My informants named 21 Piegan, 8 156
Blood, and 3 North Blackfoot Indians who possessed objects sacred to the horse medicine cult. All were not horse medicine practitioners. Judging from the frequency of their mention by informants the following seem to have been the most prominent and/or most active horse medicine doctors in buffalo days: the Piegan Indians Wolf Calf, Fish Child, White Antelope, Boy, and Generous Woman; the Blood Indians Water-Old-Man, Owner-of-Sacred-White-Horse, Many-Spotted-Horses, and Ghost Woman; and the North Blackfoot Indian, Yellow Lodge. Ghost Woman was the only female known to have possessed horse medicine powers.

Among the South Piegan, at least, the horse medicine men com- 794
prised an organized cult, the members of which attended the cult 778
ceremony, the horse dance, in a body, interchanged secrets of the uses of specific medicines, and throughout much if not all of the cult's known history had a recognized leader. In the middle and late 19th

A [See category 115, p. 358-N--Analyst]

789 of his party. Then they could chase buffalo without mishap, no matter how bad the footing.

224 A man who possessed horse medicine for use in catching wild horses rubbed it on his hands, feet, and rope. Then he circled the wild horse up wind so that the odor of the medicine would be carried to the nostrils of the wild one. When the wild horse smelled the medicine it came to him. He roped it by the front feet and threw it down. Only horse medicine men were said to have had success in capturing wild horses. Apparently few of them exercised this power.

789 231 To keep a horse that had a tendency to stray in its proper herd, one who possessed horse medicine might neck it together with a gentle horse, and rub horse medicine on its nose. After a time it was untied and permitted to graze unfettered. "It would never stray again."

Lazy Boy mentioned one more use of horse medicine. If a horse medicine man became jealous of another Indian's fine horse he might employ his medicine to render that horse "no good for buffalo hunting, war or anything else."[80]

TABOOS RECOGNIZED BY HORSE MEDICINE MEN

756 784 Wallace Night Gun said that Wolf Calf had been warned in his dreams of a number of actions he should avoid and which should be avoided in his presence. These taboos have been recognized by Piegan horse medicine men since Wolf Calf's time.

[762] Ribbones or shinbones must not be broken in the horse medicine man's lodge or home. Any one who ignored this taboo would suffer a broken leg or rib.

If anyone places a knife or other sharp object upright in the ground inside a lodge when a horse medicine man is present he will surely get a sliver in one of his feet or one of his horses will suffer a foot injury.

No child should play at riding a wooden stick horse in a lodge while a horse medicine man is present, or the child will suffer misfortune.

If a horse medicine man should go into any home and see a child carelessly throwing a feather around, he must tell him to stop it at once or the family will surely have bad luck.

756 784 533 For anyone to sing any of the horse dance songs or to imitate the gestures of the horse dance except in their proper ceremonial context would bring misfortune to him. The only exception to this rule applied to owners of medicine pipe bundles who had been given horse medicine songs which could be sung in the medicine pipe ritual. The Blackfoot considered some horse medicine songs very attractive.

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[80] Wissler (1912 a, pp. 108-111) mentioned Blackfoot use of horse medicine to cure horses of the colic, revive exhausted horses, cause a horse to lose a horse race, capture enemy horses, catch wild horses and to hunt buffalo.

They were tempted to sing them for pleasure at times when they were 756 forbidden to do so. They believed that if one who had not the horse medicine power should sing a horse dance song while on horseback 784 ● his horse would fall.[91] 533

IDENTIFICATION OF HORSE MEDICINES

Identification of the substances employed by the Blackfoot as horse 778 medicines poses a difficult problem. It is certain that some of the medicines formerly employed by noted horse medicine men were not known to the Piegan or Blood Indians of the early 1940's. Wallace Night Gun acknowledged that he knew neither the substances nor the specific uses of some of the medicines in the bundle he inherited from Wolf Calf. In deference to his desire to keep those medicines [123] secret which he did employ, I did not question him as to their identity. Nevertheless, his voluntary recital of the origin and use of Wolf Calf's horse medicines (related above) makes general mention of botanical medicines, primarily roots.

Dr. V. E. Rudd, division of botany, United States National Museum, [128] compared the fragments in the seven skin pouches in Wallace Night Gun's horse medicine bundle (pl. 15, *B*)A with herbarium specimens. She found that the large, single pouch contained ground fir 778 needles, probably *Abies lasiocarpa*. McClintock (1910, p. 524) reported 824 Blackfoot use of sweet pine in poultices for fevers and colds in the chest in the treatment of humans. One of the small pouches [157] on the buckskin cord contained rootstocks of baneberry (*Actaea eburnia*). McClintock (1910, p. 526) stated that the root of this plant [157] was boiled as a Blackfoot medicine for coughs and colds. Each of the other five pouches contained bracts of flower heads of sagebrush (*Artemisia* sp.). However, each of these pouches was marked with a different-colored bead. It is possible that some of the finely powdered material in these pouches comprised bits of other plants used in conjunction with the sagebrush. McClintock (1910, p. 526) listed [157] *Artemisia frigida* tops as a Blackfoot remedy for heartburn and mountain fever.

A century and a half ago David Thompson (1916, p. 365) observed 778 that the Indians of the Plains collected "scented grasses, and the gums 824 that exude from the shrubs that bear berries and a part of these is 232 for giving to their horses to make them long winded in the chase." Presumably he had reference to botanical medicines administered by laymen rather than by horse medicine men. Short Face, who was not a member of the horse medicine cult, believed some of the secret medicines used by horse medicine men were the same ones administered to

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[91] Wissler (1912 a, pp. 108, 111) cited the taboos against breaking a shinbone in the lodge and singing of horse medicine songs out of context.

A [See category 778, p. 358-N--Analyst]

joke with your brother's, it means you are in earnest." The only Blood 593
confined to the insane asylum, whose case was not complicated by physical 578
causes, attempted to murder his wife because he believed she was having 152
intercourse with a ghost. Many a husband, approaching his end, threatens 831
his mate with death, for only when she accompanies him on his final journey [572]
can he be sure that in the next world he alone will possess her.

Husbands, who need proof of good behavior and who can afford to pay [158]
for it, may insist that their wives "vow the tongues"[180] or put up the Sun [775]
Lodge, for only those who are chaste before and faithful after marriage can 593
do so with impunity. Sometimes, however, the pressure may be so great, 796
that a woman must take a chance. Urged by her husband who remained un- 783
convinced concerning her virginity at marriage, Weasel Girl distributed the 626
tongues at the Sun Dance. Her husband's uncle, noting that she failed to 784
mention the names of any men she had rebuffed, suspected her avowal, and [837]
threw his piece of meat to a dog at his side. Later that evening, this dog
was shot while making off with a chicken. His alertness and caution had [836]
saved him, the uncle was certain, from a sure and untimely death. That
Weasel Girl, herself, only lived three years longer was further evidence that
she had lied.

Suspicion is not always without cause, as it may well have been in this 837
instance. The most casual encounter, the social dances in the dance hall,
even the Sun Dance, offer innumerable opportunities for illicit adventures,
and these are not missed. Many a husband has found his wife with her lover.
But so obsessed are they by their suspicions, that every possibility of [152]
adultery immediately becomes a fact.

Informal wife-lending among the Blood is inconceivable whether to a 432
casual friend[181] or a life-long "*taka*." Yet this act which cannot be tolerated 778
in daily living, is ritually sanctioned when the sorcery roots are purchased
by members in the Horn Society.[182] At this time, the wife of the buyer 786
deposits her clothes in her husband's lap. Protected by a buffalo robe, she 575
is taken to the tipi of the seller and ceremonially painted. She then "goes 754

837

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[180] Wissler, *Blackfoot Sun Dance*, p. 234 ff.

[181] Henry in his Journal (vol. 2, p. 526) states that the Blackfoot were a "nuisance in offering women." Wissler (*Social Life*, p. 10) observes that he believes these women were captives.

[182] Among the neighboring Cree the opposite situation existed. They practised 171
informal wife exchange. D. G. Mandelbaum (*The Plains Cree*, p. 246) writes: "This
relationship reflected considerable honor upon the participants, for only the most 837
stout-hearted men could become intimate companions of their wives' paramours."
But in a ceremony called Sitting Up Until Morning (*ibid.*, p. 228) although the
"warriors of one society issued invitations to the wives or daughters of the members
of other societies" and "at dawn, the men washed and painted the women's faces,

824 [825] been able to review this with him. He said that the cutting of small trees
was sanctified with fire originating from a sweet grass lighter.

TOBACCO

Nicotiana multivalvis

276 796 Smoking was an important part of Blackfoot ritual: like the communal
182 meal, it tended to emphasize the inclusiveness of those partaking.
575 249 Traditionally, the native tobacco (Nicotiana multivalvis) was ceremonially
796 planted and harvested by members of a North Blackfoot society known as the
Tobacco society (Fig. 4). (It is noteworthy that this society was not a
[184] [561] part of the age-graded system and that it was maintained only by the North
Blackfoot.) For about a week, each spring, members gathered at the sacred
planting-grounds. Elaborate ceremonies accompanied the sowing. The tobacco
[237] [415] seed, with fertilizer, had been stored through the winter in pericardium
containers of the society's Tobacco bundles. (The same bundle, less certain
paraphernalia, was alternately called the Beaver bundle.)

249 [782] Between the period of planting and havensting, taboos prevented anyone
[784] from visiting the plots, because the young plants were being tended by
[786] [776] supernatural Small People, who did their gardening in return for offerings
of miniature apparel, which had been left at the close of the planting
ceremony (Fig. 5).

824 778 At harvest, in the fall, the seed was used to replenish the bundle
276 supplies, and the leaves were distributed to the appropriate claimants, who
[249] in turn later distributed leaves to the other divisions of the tribe. The
tobacco usually was mixed with the leaves of kinnikinnik (Arctos-taphylos
uva-ursi) or the dried cambium or red-osier dogwood (Cornus stolonifera).
The mixtures were included with all religious bundles---either in the bundle
proper or in a preliminary bundle.

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 17]

137 to the lush riber-bottoms. Our information has to do only with those
growing along the prairie streams (Fig. 7).

343 Sweat lodges (Fig. 8, 9 & 10) were associated with all of the ceremonial
824 bundles, with most of the societies, with all of the medicine pipes, and
[778]
[178] with the Holy Lodge, or Okan, of the Sun Dance. Traditionally, the water
birch (Betula occidentalis) was used in the construction of sweat lodges;
however, in recent times, because of a difference of opinion among ceremonalists
as to the origin of birch, only willows (Salix spp.) came to be used.
A given number of wands were sharpened at both ends. One end was planted in
the ground, and the wand was woven through the rest of the wands until the
other end reached the ground, where it was forced in. The sweat lodge was
a dome-shaped shelter in which two to six men could sit. When it was ready
for use it was covered with skin robes or blankets. In some cases the
[778] sweat lodges were painted and the ceremonial bundles were placed on top of
the lodge. Sweat lodges also were built for bundles that had not been used
for a long time.

[823] The door always faced east. (Sometimes there was a west door, through
which the participants left after the ceremony.) A small pit, of variable
size and shape, was excavated in the center of the floor, and hot stones
[782] were placed in it. Due west from the east door was the sweet-grass smudge.
The floor was covered with sage (Artemisia ludoviciana), which was used for
[782] cleansing. (Sometimes a small offering of meat and sage was buried in the
[27] base of the pit before the hot stones were rolled in.) Sage was chewed by
● [789] assistants to the participants during the sweat-lodge rituals to relieve
thirst resulting from taboos against the consumption of liquids.

575
343 The Horn Society sweat lodge was constructed of fourteen willows. The
824 Holy Woman's sweat lodge in the Sun Dance was made of one hundred willows,

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 24]

346 The tree was debranched and carried (by wagon, in later days) to its
824 place of erection. All could help in raising the center pole, and while it
796 was going up everybody sang songs of rejoicing and fired guns into the air.
Then certain societies were chosen to gather branches for use in completing
[178] the lodge. In recent times, among the North Blackfoot these duties have
[575] fallen to the Prairie Chicken and Crazy Dog societies. They return on
horseback, holding the boughs erect and singing songs of joy.

[823] The parade traverses the camp sunwise and enters by the west gate (Fig. 17).

CREEPING JUNIPER

Juniperus horizontalis Moench

824 Creeping juniper (Fig. 18), called sik-si-nou-koo ("black round object (berry)") in Blackfoot, is a common plant of the plains. Although it is strongly aromatic, it was not used as incense; however, there were other uses for its branches and berries.

824 The Holy Lodge dancer of the Sun Dance performed upon a carpet of
796
[784] juniper branches. It was forbidden to spit on the covering; instead, one
[237] had to lift the branches and spit under them. An Okan dancer held the wing
[292] of an owl in his left hand and a branch of juniper in the other. One
informant said that, in addition to carrying the branch, some dancers wore
headpieces of juniper berries; the headpiece had seven berries representing
[532] the Bunched Stars (Pleiades). (The same stars are portrayed in tipi designs.)
Sprigs of creeping juniper were also used symbolically to decorate the altar
of the Marten-designed tipi.

[533] Although there does not seem to have been any song directly associated
with the creeping juniper, there was an indirect reference in the songs of
[292] the Weasel-tailed suits. These suits, which were fringed with white weasel
[237] tails, were considered to be very powerful and had to be transferred just

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 36]

BIRTH CONTROL

824 In the matter of birth control, the Blackfoot practiced it in two ways.
842 778 Conception was thought to be avoided through the use of a special ceremonial
[847] bundle and abortions were performed with the aid of an herbal brew. The
[791] former required the services of a diviner who professed the power to prevent
conception while the latter was an event that could be accomplished by the
mother alone.

[126] Several of these anti-conception bundles, constructed between 1880-1930,
[791] have been collected and the authors reported of at least fourteen more on
the reservations of the Blackfoot, still being used by elderly diviners,
all women.

[301] There is a consistant pattern of bundle contents (see Figs. 27 &28);
[237] [386] otter-skin wristlets each with an incised bone bead, the design representing
[532] a snake; yellow ochre in a skinbag; and a quantity of pulverized plant
material in another skinbag. An exception to this pattern is the bundle
[291] collected by Ewers which contained a beaded, snake-shaped belt and lacked
[301] wristlets.

824 A woman seeking conception control would approach a diviner for
778 791 instruction in the use of the bundle. The diviner would, for a fee, use her
842 bundle on the patient or make one for her. Without going into the details
[302] of the ceremony, we should note that the major part of the ritual involves
the ochreing of the body from the head down to the navel and from the feet
[301] to the knees, therby isolating the reproductive area. The wristlets were
● [784] worn for a prescribed period during which time the patient was enjoined to
[825] observe certain taboos. The ceremony was usually performed in the spring
when the snakes emerged from hibernation.

432 The ceremony within the enclosure is chiefly that of the transfer.[A] For
561 this four days and nights were required. The incoming members[A] were
required to abstain from sleep during this entire period. During the night
575 they often paraded about the camps, occasionally shouting. A curious
796 thing is that during this period they are forbidden to scratch themselves
● [784] with the fingers but are given scratching sticks. Should they use the fingers
they will become scabby and vermin-infested like the kit-fox. At no time
561 must fox hair be burned in a member's tipi and no rabbit meat cooked at his
575 fireplace. McClintock states that members were not permitted to kill or
[789] trap the kit-fox.[1] According to Grinnell, "if they were at war in summer
[825] and wanted a storm to come up, they would take some dirt and water and
rub it on the kit-fox skin, and this would cause a rain-storm to come up.
In winter, snow and dirt would be rubbed on the skin and this would bring
up a snow-storm."[2]

[302] Unlike the horns, the wives were not members; but they were painted by the former members in the manner described for the horns, to give them the power to care for and handle their husbands' regalia. We obtained no account of this ceremony, further than the belief that it was identical with that of the horn society (p. 410). The notion that the women were not members may, of course, be but a difference in point of view, since their functions in the kit-fox seem to have been about the same as in the horns.[3]

[173] In closing, it may be noted that we find a tradition that the kit-fox as here described was the result of an ancient union between two other societies. What these were, we did not learn. Big-brave says he saw the last kit-fox dance some fifty years ago, but that for many years several of the lances were kept and transferred as other bundles. The lances and headdress were often carried to war as individual war bundles. In former times, only members were permitted to touch the lances or any other part of the regalia.

THE CATCHERS.

The organization of this society is as follows:—

Leaders (2)
Pipe men (2)
Tomahawk men (2)
Catchers (x)
Drummers (4)
Women members (x)

---

[1] McClintock, 416.

[2] Grinnell, 262.

[3] Bear-skin and Big-brave state that the horn and kit-fox societies were the same in most respects. Their lances were alike, the women were "painted" the same way, but what is more to the point, the kit-fox songs are sung in the horn ceremonies.

Maximilian (German ed. 577) notes both the kit-fox and the horns, giving the hooked staff as the emblem of the former and asserting that the latter wear "thin horns."

A. [See Category 116, p. 401--Analyst]

The following is the statement of a Blood woman who had herself taken part in the ceremonies:— 561 575

The members of the horn society are regarded as very powerful men and women. It is very dangerous even to talk about them and one must not tell what is done in the society; ill luck will surely befall him if he does. The ceremonies are secret. [784] The power of members is so great that to wish anyone ill or dead is all that is needed to bring the realization. Among the Blood, the fear of the horn society is still so great that in court proceedings it is usual to take oath by them, that being the most solemn oath. Thus, a man will swear, "I will speak the truth by the horns." [695]

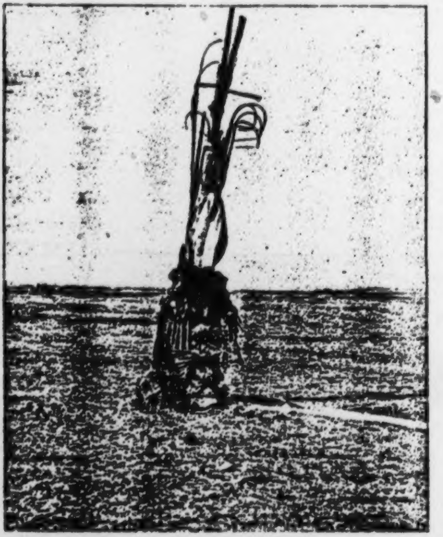

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Fig. 19. Photograph showing the Offerings of the Horn and Ma'toki Societies on the Sun Dance Field (1903).

Like other societies the rule is for all the members to sell, or transfer at the same time. This transfer usually takes place in the summer. Both men and women belong, usually husbands and wives, though the latter seem to have a minor part. 561 575

There are two male leaders. They wear similar regalia; weasel tail shirts and leggings with bonnets bearing horns and tails. One of these bonnets bears a small arrow, sticking straight out in front. (Fig. 20.) [292] [237]

Next in rank are two men wearing "straight-up-bonnets." (One of these was [531] [796]

561
575 vir, autem pipam prope mulieris caput collocat, at, tunica eius abrepta, libidini dat
796 laxas habenas.A Our informant states that this white lance owner is usually jealous
432 of his wife for obvious causes and is not likely to get on well with her.

[833] The following is an extract from Mr. Duvall's notes:—

561
575 A—— is an old man about seventy-five years old and quite absent-minded so that
[114] his narrative is somewhat disconnected. Once during the talk the clock in my house
began to strike. He paused and when it stopped, prayed to it for help in obtaining
[115] food.

This man is a Piegan but once married a Blood woman and lived with that
division for a time. Thus he came to be taken into the horn society. He did not
care to join, but one day a horn member came to his tipi, circled it, and then came in.
[784] He said that he had come to take me into the horns. "You cannot refuse for I have
circled your tipi," he said. This meant that bad luck would be his portion, if he
[302] refused. Hence, our informant became a member. He was conducted to the meet-
[237] ing place and painted entire with the "seventh paint." A black circle was marked
around his face. The women, by the way, wear seven plumes in their hair.

[784] It is very dangerous even to talk about the society. Once in a dance two mem-
bers fell down; they died in a short time. Our informant once killed a buffalo by the
[789] power of the horns. In chasing a herd of buffalo, he began to fall behind. Then he
rode back and forth across their trail four times, whipped the ground and shouted.
Setting out again he saw a fat cow, down but still kicking. At another time he used
[754] the same formula to cause a rider's horse to fall. Again at a horse race between
some Piegan and Flathead Indians, he spat four times upon a stone and placed it in
the hoof print of the opposing racer, which soon became lame.

When a horn member wishes to kill a person, he sharpens one end of a small stick,
[784] paints it red, names the victim and casts the stick into the fire. Once when the horns
were assembled, a man came in and denounced them vigorously. No one said
anything in reply, but within four days the defamer took sick and died. Thus it is
dangerous to speak evil of them. Even white men fear them.

561 Our informant's wife did not join the horns because she was blind. The society,
575 had both day and night ceremonies. The latter was spoken of as, "sending them out,"
796 the women being sent out to be painted by the retiring members. On the evening
for this ceremony, orders are sent out for everybody to remain indoors as the horns
432 are about to send out their wives to be painted. The people fear them and obey:
[784] should anyone go out, he will meet with grave misfortune.

Once while the horns were marching around, they entered a tipi but the leader, seeing that he must pass in front of a medicine-pipe man, paused. The others told him to go on as the power of the horns was much greater. So they all passed in front of him.

In the painting ceremony the wives are usually sent out in charge of a third man
[431] to conduct them to the ceremonial father. This conductor is expected to make the
woman fine presents; hence one seldom wants to perform this service, but does it
only by compulsion. The woman will afterward treat her conductor in a familiar
manner, she may sit by him and wait upon him, occasionally "scratch his head,"
and her husband can say nothing.

[302] In the painting ceremony the husbands are assembled in the meeting place and
wait there while their wives are conducted to the respective fathers' tipis. The father

A. [See p. 416-A for a translation--Analyst]

takes the woman out-of-doors and proceeds with the painting. If properly done, 561
he spits a piece of turnip into her mouth.

The woman is then conducted back to her husband. As they come near the 575
meeting place, the conductor gives a faint signal, like 796
scouts on the warpath. Then he announces the name 432
of the husband after which the woman enters and spits [784]
the piece of turnip into her husband's mouth. This
turnip is evidence that she was properly painted. She
then squats over a smudge.

Some of the women are refused by the fathers, [558]
because they themselves are not of good repute or
because their husbands are not worthy men. In any
case, it is a disgrace to the husband not to have his
wife properly painted. 561

Our informant never went through this painting 575
ceremony. Some time after joining, a woman came 796
one night and kicked on one of the tipi poles saying 531
that she came to be painted. He told her that he 237
could not because he had not received the necessary 532
instructions. She then returned to her husband, who →
sent her to another man.

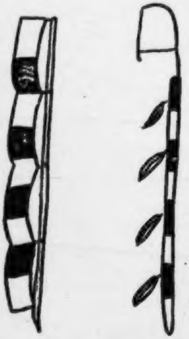

Fig. 23. Sketch of Standards used by the Horns. *a* A yellow painted Staff about seven feet long; *b* Staff carried by the mounted Members. Drawn by an Informant.

The writer has a statement from Stranglingwolf that the members wear no clothes and paint 561 575
the entire body red. Some wear plumes at the 796
backs of the head, others wear war-bonnets of [292]
several different forms. The lances, however, [302]
are the main objects. They are usually made of
pine and cut thirty hands long. The leader's
lance is five hands longer. The hook is made of birch and tied with sinew. [237]
Around the places where the lance is to be held, bladders are wrapped, [824]
because no one should touch any of the other parts. Nine eagle tail-feathers
are used for each lance. The wrappings are of otter and swan skin. These [782]
are kept in bundles, but new sticks are required for each ceremony, the old
ones being offered to the sun (Fig. 19).A These are provided by certain men
and the fee is a horse in each case. When the stick is cut, prayers are [782]
offered and some tobacco left at the stump.[1] The whole camp must keep
very quiet while the stick is being prepared. The curved portion is made
and then bound on to the end of the staff. Then the whole is painted red, [531]
after which the wrappings and feathers are added.

There are three kinds of bonnets: the straight-up kind, one with horns, and one without.

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[1] Flat-tail, a Piegan, once cut and prepared a kit-fox lance for the writer. He performed the ceremony properly, but later met with misfortune and death. It was common talk that all this resulted from his meddling with the power of the kit-fox. [784]

A.[See Category 116, p. 411--Analyst]

561 The leader of this society has the say as to when the camp circle shall be
575 formed and where. He pitches his tipi within the circle.

When dancing, the lances are held out in front almost vertical. The
561 drummers sit in the center. The members dance around them sun-wise,
575 except those with the straight-up bonnets, each bearing a rattle. The latter
go in the reverse direction. The dance is closed by the leader shaking a robe
796 as if driving buffalo.

535 Mr. Duvall writes, "Near the close of the dance the man wearing the
bonnet with the arrow dances in the lead while all the other members follow
him. He attempts to break through the lines of the spectators who wave
him back with blankets and robes and shout. The dancers seat themselves
and then go through the same movements as before, trying to break through
the crowd, etc. At the fourth attempt the spectators allow the dancers
to pass, ending the dance."

[782] When the unwrapped sticks are offered at the sun dance a square rawhide
bag is tied on containing the paint and moccasins used in the ceremony.

561 A curious rule is that when a man sells his membership, he must not meet
575 the purchasers, they being as taboo as mother-in-law and son-in-law. Once
[532] when visiting the Blood there was great confusion in the writer's tent over
● [784] the unexpected entrance of a new horn member. Like the mother-in-law
taboo, this can be removed by liberal gifts in a special manner.

[606] The belief is strong that horn members have power of life and death over
[431] all outsiders. A short magic formula is known to them with which the result
[754] can be had.

Running-wolf, a very able Blood Indian, is authority for the statement
561 that after the bull society became extinct the horns took over many of their
575 rites. The headdress of the horn leader is said to have been worn by the
173 bulls. His very aged mother remembered seeing the bull dance. He called
attention to the large part buffalo conceptions seem to play in the ceremonies
and origin myths, whereas the kit-fox of the Piegan has a different mythical
origin. One of our Piegan informants was positive that the buffalo did not
figure in the kit-fox ritual in any manner whatsoever. It will be noted that
this theory of Running-wolf is consistent with our accounts of the kit-fox.
On the whole, we believe this to be the most probable explanation of the
[554] differences between the horns and the kit-fox. In a way, this would also
account for the unusual prestige now enjoyed by this organization.

He brought it from the Crow where he lived some twelve years. He knew that 794
it came from the seven stars. The Crow gave him some seeds of a small plant with a [177]
song, which gave him a membership. After a time he dreamed of six dwarfs and they
gave him power to get horses, property, food, and long life. Since that time he has [787]
always had abundance. When he came back to the Piegan, he sold or transferred [432]
to Curly-bear some of his power and since that time the latter has prospered. He
claims that all of the members are prosperous. When a member is taken in he is [237]
given the skin of an otter, blackbird, weasel, beaver, or something with a song.
These songs must have been dreamed by some of the members. Women can be
taken in alone, but if married, both husband and wife must join; likewise when a
man joins, his wife must enter. A man joins by calling upon a member, making [432]
him gifts and asking him for some of the Crow-water power. These gifts are supposed
to be many quilts, horses, etc. Each member gives him some object and an associated [424]
song.

The members receiving the gifts must divide them among other members as far 794
as they will go, one thing for each. Each one receiving a horse must contribute 432
some object, a song and some power, the others are free to choose. Thus, the highest 424
price paid for membership brings the most medicines. The objects are placed in a 422
bundle which becomes the new member's individual medicine. They are not treated
as most medicine bundles, but may be opened at any time.

In the ceremonies the women usually do the dancing. The men seldom dance 794
but do the singing. The women do not sing when they are dancing. There are no
regular times for meetings, but it is usual to hold them every Sunday and at the time 796
of the new moon. Ceremonies are held in compliance with vows of outsiders or
members as with other medicines, but they may meet on any occasion. The number
of members is not limited in any way. None of the proceedings are secret. Everybody may look in, but only members can come inside of the tipi or ceremonial circle.

The members usually paint their faces yellow, with red bars across the mouth [302]
and forehead. A rectangle of red is also made upon the backs of the hands. A few
plumes and feathers are worn on the head. There are no other regalia, the chief [292]
things being the individual bundles of the members.

The taboos observed by bundle owners are also in evidence. Neither marrow 794
nor bones may be placed in the fire or the owner's horse will have his leg broken.
Lodge pins must not be put in the fire or the owner will have a tumor (?); nor must 784
iron be put in the fire and allowed to become red hot, or the owner's teeth will fall 751
out. If lodge poles are burnt up, horses will die. The owner must not touch moccasins while smoking; he will have a scabby mouth. Moccasins placed under the bed will bring bad luck. When dancing and smoking, if one should pass in front of him, the smoker goes blind. He must not lend a blanket to another as this will bring bad results.

The medicine formula or power may be used as follows: — If a member wishes a 794
horse, he calls in other members and sings the songs and offers prayers. It is believed
that one so doing will soon be called upon for some service and receive a horse as a 789
fee. Other wishes may be gratified in the same way. An outsider desiring anything may formally announce that he provides food and presents for a meeting. Then members assemble and hold a meeting. This is usual in sickness. Vows to provide the feast may be made as in case of medicine bundles.[1]

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[1] Vol. 7, 148, 172.

wife are given some clothing. In all, four sweat houses must be made but there is no 794
rule as to the interval between the making of each sweat house, it being merely a 432
matter of convenience. After the fourth sweat house and dance, the new member and his wife go to the dance taking with them blankets, calico, and probably eight horses to be given as a fee to the father. The grandfather has first choice of the horses and the rest of the things are divided among the members. Then all the members spread open their bundles and the new member may choose one object from each bundle. With each object he is given a song. If at any time the new member should visit his grandfather, he must give him a present.

Women as well as men are taken into this society, some unmarried women being members. During the dance, if there is a large attendance, each member sings only three or four of his songs, as it would take too long for everyone to sing all his songs.

Members of the society recognize the following taboos: bones must not be 794
heated inside of a member's tipi; meat must not be cut in a kettle, nor must a knife
be used to stir food while it is cooking; the picket pins must never be burned, should [784]
one be burned horses will be lost. When a member dreams of some new thing to be [787]
made up, he goes to his grandfather to do so and pays him for it. After the new medicine has been made up, he tells the others about it.

The different medicine objects in the bundles are: mink, muskrat, otter belt, [778]
weasel, blackbird, sparrows, night hawks, beaver, magpies, snow birds, a wooden hand, a whistle, robins, and other birds.

The power of this society consists in causing its members to become wealthy. [789]
Also, when the members pray, it cures the sick.

Before Owl-top joined this society an old woman, who came from the Crow, [756]
gave him a yellow shirt, a yellow robe, and a riding whip for which he gave her two horses and other things. The shirt, robe, and riding whip belong to the Crow-water medicine society. The old woman told him that some time one of his mares would have a pinto colt, and that whenever this happened, he would have many differently colored horses. Long after she told him this, he dreamed four times of many differently colored horses. Then he believed what she had told him. Now, it has been some time since the old woman told him about this pinto colt, and none of his mares have ever born such a colt, but his son-in-law's mares have had two pinto colts. He believes these are the colts the old woman prophesied about and thinks
that now his horses will begin to increase. This society came from the Crow, but [177]
it is not known how the Crow got it.

We previously published two origin myths for the crow-water formula, 794
one of which was evidently devised from the beaver bundle cycle.[1] In 177
both, however, the Crow origin of the society is emphatically announced. 174
Since Dr. R. H. Lowie, who has made a thorough study of the Crow, finds
no similar society among them, some discussion seems necessary. The fact [171]
that two individuals contributed to the society seems to favor the existence of some parent ceremony among the Crow. On the other hand, the bundles and procedures of the society are typically Blackfoot, the only distinguishing characteristic as such, being the grouping of bundle owners into an organiza-

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[1] Vol. 2, 77, 80.

794 through the same performance. While dancing they all sing and some carry bells to
796 keep time. Others hold both hands on their breasts as in the stick game. No
drums are used. It is thought that the more the dancers exert themselves during
535 the dance the better will be the result of their prayers.

[534] Some members have hypnotic power. The prayers are for food, success in all
undertakings, and protection against death. They pray to those who have given
[928] them power or songs in their dreams.

[789] The origin of the dance is given in the following:—

794 A man had been ill for a long time and was not expected to recover. One time,
while still ill, those around him heard him try to sing and raise himself. He sup-
173 ported himself on a post, meanwhile humming. Then he returned to his bed, and
787 said, "I have had a dream. A deer came to me and said, 'I have come to help you. I have taken pity on you. You see yonder hill. I will lead you to the top of it. Hold my windpipe, but if you pull my windpipe in two before we reach the top, you will die. If not, you will get well.' We went up the hill very slowly. When we reached the top, the deer said, 'There are four deer on yonder ridge which I will give you. When you kill them take out the windpipe and lungs of one of them as you see mine now. Be careful and do not cut them in two. Take them home and cook them and give a dance and eat them and you will be well.' That is why I got out of bed and held on to the post. I thought it was the deer." Then he said to the two men, "Go to yonder ridge and kill the four deer there. Butcher one of them as I was told in the dream and bring it to me." They returned with the deer. That night they held a dance, the black-tailed deer dance.

794 Before hunting, a deer dance is held, so they may dream where the game
[224] will be found. Sometimes the leader dances, holding a post with both
hands with bells, deer hoofs or claws in one hand, and a handkerchief or skin
[789] in the other. Anyone who believes in the dance may join whether he has
[796] songs or not. Some of the regalia for the dance are: rabbit ears, deer
claws and hoofs, feathers, plumes, mink skins, otterskins, sleigh bells, and
[237] deer tails, also weasel skins, owl and other feathers. Juniper is more fre-
[824] quently used for the smudge than sweetgrass. The members paint in
[302] red or yellow with a stripe across the forehead and one across the chin.

Some members have power to give ill luck and to charm game. When
794 game is killed by the members, they must not cut into the windpipe, nor give
789 the heart to the dogs. The head of deer must not be used by anyone as food,
224 nor must children be allowed to play with it or the hoofs. The reason that
these taboos must be kept is that the member may be able to charm game.
[784] When they wish to go out to hunt, they set up a stick covered with cloth about twelve inches long at the rear of the tipi and make a smudge of juniper back of it. The men sing, but must not pass between the stick and the fireplace.

the pipe. At the close of each dance he fills the pipe and hands it to the 794
leader after which it circulates. As soon as it is burned out the dancing 769
is resumed. There are four periods of dancing. The evolutions consist 796
of dancing, alternately facing the fire and the walls, twice for each. Then 535
all sit down, save the leader who takes the pipe and prays. Then he sits
down and smokes. In starting a dance all rise to their knees, making
movements as in playing the stick game, where with four movements they
rise to their feet.

During the ceremonies no one must laugh nor must anyone spit. No [784]
dead person should be designated by name. [551]

A special ceremony was sometimes given by two members. They did
not use the regular painting but dressed in fine clothes and danced with [789]
ropes and whips. This was believed to bring good luck in capturing horses.

THE ALL-SMOKING CEREMONY.

We come now to a ceremony that goes by the name kanochisisin, or all-smoking 794
ceremony. It is not clear whether this is a cult or simply a group
ceremony like the sun dance. The right to lead in the proceedings seems [424]
to be owned by one individual and may be transferred like other ritualistic
things. Thus it is said, "If the man who leads in the ceremony is pleased [432]
with the presents he receives, he may transfer the right to lead to one pledging
the ceremony."

The distinguishing feature of the ceremony is that it is a kind of medicine [554]
coup counting. Like warriors recounting their deeds, those present are
called upon to count over the different medicine rituals they have owned
and all fired with new enthusiasm to secure more. In conformity to a vow 794
or formal pledge a man will invite people to his tipi for an evening feast. 796
He will engage a man with the right to lead to conduct the all-smoking 554
ceremony. He will have ready a pot of tongues and berry soup; also a
quantity of tobacco cut and mixed. The meeting is to last until this is
used up. Each guest is called upon in turn to sing songs from one of the
rituals of medicines owned by him. So they pass around in order. The
process is thus a kind of counting out in that the last men are those who have
owned the most medicines.

The following account was secured by Mr. Duvall:—

When a man vows to give the all-smoking ceremony he invites many men to his 794
tipi and calls upon someone who has the privilege to lead the ceremony. A fee is 796
paid in blankets or clothing. First the man giving the feast makes a soup of tongues,
cherries, and blood. Before the tongues are cut up by the women, prayers are said [782]

778 conferred. This makes the stick game set a bundle and it has already
524 changed hands several times. At the transfer a horse and some clothing
[422] are given. (As a rule, the regular stick game sets were given to the person
winning four straight games.) The new owner's face is painted red, but
[432] in the game the players paint red crosses on the face. The songs used in
[302] the game and the special songs of the ritual are also transferred. Though
[424] the set is kept in a bundle, it seems possible to open it at any time and
[784] without the ceremony. The owner is subject to no taboos but menstruating
women must not go near the game. There must be no flirting among those
present and the players must not cheat or members of their families will die.

The following is Eagle-child's account:—

778 In 1909 Big-spring bought the stick game dance bundle from a Gros Ventre. It
524 contains twenty sticks with magpie feathers and four small plumes on the end of
each. The sticks were about fourteen inches long and half an inch in diameter and
237 were painted red. Small bells are also attached to the end of one of the feathers.
531 There are two guessing sticks about fourteen inches long with eagle feathers and a
few plumes and bells on their ends. These sticks are also painted red. There are
four bones or hiding sticks two of which were blue and two white. There is a small
wheel-like object about two and one half inches in diameter resembling the wheel
[824] used in the arrow game. This is worn by the guesser. Sweetgrass is used for the
smudge. The only difference between the two guessing sticks and the others is that
the former have eagle feathers instead of magpie feathers.

796 The stick game dance or ceremony is regarded as a powerful medicine. In it
524 prayers are offered to God only and not to the stars, moon, sun, and other Blackfoot
deities. In case of sickness the head of the family may make a vow to provide a
[778] feast for the owner of the stick game bundle if the sick one recover. Then some time
after the recovery he invites everybody, old and young, to the feast. The ceremonies
[782] are held at night though the ordinary stick game can be played at anytime. When
all have assembled, the owner of the bundle takes his place at the back of the tipi or
[755] house and makes a smudge with sweetgrass. Then he opens the bundle and takes
out the contents. He then selects or calls for a woman to act as the guesser for one
[302] side to whom he gives ten of the sticks and one of the guessing sticks. He then
prays for the guesser, paints her face on the forehead, cheeks, chin, and palms with a
red cross. Then he selects or calls for a man who comes forward and is fitted out in
the same manner as the woman. These two become the leaders for the opposing
[533] sides. All this time the singers and drummers are rendering the songs used in the
game and those connected with the bundle.

All the persons present, men, women, and children, may take part in the game, sometimes as many as forty or fifty take part. The two players then choose their sides by passing their sticks, giving one to each person. The woman also hands out two of the hiding sticks to one of her side and the other to another. The man does the same on his side. The woman lines up her players on the right, the man his on the left. The woman ties the wheel ornament on her hair and play begins and continues until one side has all the sticks. Every time a game is completed, the winners rise and dance, making a great deal of noise while the losing side keep their seats. Every time a side loses a game, a new guesser is chosen in his place. The rule is that

535 Long before the Piegan had the grass dance, thirty-five or forty years ago, some
173 of the regalia, the war-bonnet, tomahawk, two dancing whips, feather tail belt, and
a drum were captured from the Sioux and Assiniboine. A Piegan war party went
177 among the Sioux and found the body of a Sioux tied up in a tree with a large drum
[721] near it. The Piegan took the drum and used the leather head for the soles of moccasins.

Some years later the Piegan met the Crow who told them that the regalia they had captured were used in the grass dance. They also taught them the dance. Later, Bob-tail-horse, who had stolen the drum from the Sioux grave made another like it. The Piegan then organized the grass dance which was later improved by Big-nose and Running-rabbit who visited the Assiniboine and brought back many of the dance outfits. As I obtained this information from three or four different people, I am quite sure the grass dance was first given by the Crow. Though the Piegan captured some of the dance regalia, they did not know its use until they met the Crow. Thus they held the dance, but later the Gros Ventre and Assiniboine gave them more of the regalia and added much more to the dance.

535 Formerly, the rules for the dance were very different from the present rules.
575 The first grass dance society used to throw away women, horses, blankets, and other
[431] property. A stick is thrown away and whoever gets it receives the property for
which it was thrown. When a member of the dance drops anything, he must not
[784] pick it up. Now, should a member drop something during the dance all the members
dance around it in a circle, until someone picks it up, relates four war deeds, and
returns it to the owner.

[778] Most of the dance regalia, such as the tomahawk, the sword and belt, were considered very sacred. For example, if a man has been with a woman the night before
[784] the dance, he must not dance with the belt. If this rule be broken, the penalty is a
[751] lame back. Women must not touch any of these things or their hands will swell.
The men must also avoid smoking with women.

When the dance paraphernalia are not in use they are wrapped up lengthwise in a small bundle of calico, and tied with a cord. Before using, a smudge is made and the bundle held in it.

One of the members furnished the tobacco and filled the pipes for the others to smoke. Four single women members were taken in. These women assisted in the
[789] singing and often rode double with the men when they rode around the camps at
night, singing. The evening before the dance some of the members would sing
[787] to bring good weather the next day. They had a pipe about seven inches long
painted red. One of the members filled the pipe, held it up, remaining seated.
While the others sang, he held the bowl and stem with both hands on a level with his eyes. Then he dropped the pipe to the ground. If none of the tobacco was spilled the day would be fine, but if some was dropped the day would be stormy.

[262] In the dance, dogs are eaten. These are furnished by outsiders who are well paid in blankets, clothing, and possibly a gun and horse. Each member is supposed to bring with him a cup in which the berry soup or coffee is placed by two or more men. If a member has no cup the food will be poured into his hat or blanket to teach him to bring a cup the next time. While the food is being served all the members say, "How," meaning, "I have enough." Should any member omit this, he will be compelled to eat all the food alone as a punishment.[1]

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[192] [1] On inquiry Mr. Duvall found that the Indians were ignorant of the origin of this word, but used it because it was taught them by the Assiniboine in transferring the ceremony. This is an interesting example of a borrowed word. In Dakota, the word is used in greeting or in expressing satisfaction.

When a dance is announced, all the members leave blankets or other property 535
with the whip or sword owners as a pledge to attend the dance. Should a member 575
fail to attend, his property will be destroyed by the sword and whip men. Occasionally, [784]
other property is returned in its stead.

During the dance, the whip owners aided by the sword owners, force the members
to dance by striking them. Should they cause the blood to flow, the whip and sword [681]
men pay the injured man well. When the members wish to go out during the dance they give the whip owners some trinket, as a ring or necklace, in order to get permission to leave.

Later the grass dance society sold their dance regalia to the Blood. Afterwards [184]
the Piegan frequently visited the Assiniboine and Gros Ventre and returned with
some grass dance regalia and revived the dance, and added more to it every year. [177]
Nowadays, the dance is very different from what it used to be, and is not considered
powerful medicine. Dog flesh is no longer eaten, although the feast itself has not [178]
been abolished. At the present time anyone may join the dance as it is only given [262]
for amusement.

Henry-no-bear, one of the best singers among the grass dance members, once [432]
paid seven horses, a gun, and blankets for the office of furnishing tobacco. When
he sold to another man he received in payment only two horses and a few blankets. [424]
Nowadays, they neither sell nor buy into the society, but anyone owning a good dance outfit joins the dance. Sometimes one man can borrow the dance outfit from another and dance with it. There is no leader in the dance as all the members wish to be chiefs.

A second informant gave the following:—

At the present time the grass dance may be danced by anyone as it is not a ceremonial 535
dance. Once the crow belt and some other things were held to be sacred. [778]
The Blood now have a sacred crow belt.

Formerly, the members feared to smoke a pipe with a woman. Should a member [784]
drop anything at any time he must leave it for another to pick up. Only the counting of four war deeds will give him the right to do so. This taboo is nowadays kept
only during the dance and is entirely disregarded at other times. Often property, [231]
such as blankets, or horses, or even a woman is thrown away during the grass dance.[1]

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[1] An informant commented as follows: — Sometimes the grass dancers give up their [586]
wives. However, as this dance came from the Crow, the custom is more common among
them. Some twenty years ago Flat-tail, a Piegan, gave up his wife during the grass dance. [587]
He threw away a stick and said at the same time, "This is my wife, I am going to throw her away." One, John-shorty, picked up the stick and took the woman as his wife. Both are still living. This was the first time this was done among the Piegan.

When a man finds fault with his wife he simply sends her back to her own people. One time a man discovered that his wife had a lover. Instead of killing her, as is usually done, he told her he would force her to marry her lover. The woman's brother heard of this and killed her. So the Piegan never make their wives marry others.

In the dog society it is the custom to give away a woman. A Blood once had several wives and decided to give the youngest to a man he liked. They were married and he called the man son-in-law and treated the young woman as his daughter. Another Piegan was very fond of the sweat house. One of his wives ran off with another man. The people told the young man with whom the Piegan's wife had run off to make a sweat house and pay the husband a horse for his wife. The man was well pleased with the sweat house and did not even accept the horse, but gave up his wife to the other and both men remained good friends.

535 In throwing away a blanket the stick is not used. Nowadays this custom is not 575 adhered to very strongly. Only when visitors from other reservations are present are presents given. There are seven belts belonging to different members with which [431] all the members must dance and present to the visitors whatever they can afford, horses, blankets, or money. Others relate war deeds and give away property to the visitors.

[534] There are three dance houses on the reservation. Four large drums are used in the dance but only one of these may be used at a time. These drums are made of cow hide and about the size of a bass drum. Some commercial drums are also used. [531] The cowhide drums are painted blue and red and placed on curved sticks, decorated with beadwork. About eight men sit around the drum, each man taking his turn to sing and drum.

[292] When the women dance the singers rise to sing for them. The women dance in a circle with the men among them. Four women dance around at a time, wearing war-bonnets, all the women taking turns at wearing them. After the women have [431] danced, the dance ends. The wearing of the bonnets brings with it the same obligations as the wearing of one of the seven belts among the men, that is, presenting gifts to visitors. The four war-bonnets are hung up at the rear of the dance house. Before the women begin to dance, four men rise, dance, and each counting four war deeds, the bonnets are given to the women.

[262] Six or eight chiefs or old warriors are chosen to eat the dog. They are seated on a blanket near the pot of dog meat and after they have finished eating, they rise and dance, each one tells four war deeds and gives presents. The man who owns the arrow or spoon rises and dips the point of the arrow into the pot of dog meat which is then ready for the dog eaters.

Nowadays, there seems to be no leader in the dance as every one wishes to be leader. There is one man who cares for the tobacco and fills the pipes for all the members; five men to do the lashing to induce the members to dance. These men give presents at the beginning of the dance thus purchasing the right to the whipping. [681] These men dance around and lash all those who remain seated. If they should bruise anyone while doing this, they must pay the person who is hurt. Two other men have swords, or long knives, and assist the lashers. Three men act as criers, announcing when gifts are made, where the next dance is to take place, etc.

Among the women, there are two whippers. Everyone dresses and paints to suit his own fancy. Usually the dance lasts all day and half the night. Near the end of the dance the dog meat and other food is eaten. The feast is provided by those who give the dance.

[794] Should a member drop anything during the dance he must not pick it up. All the members rise and dance in a circle until someone picks up the object dropped, relates four war deeds, and returns it to its owner.

[533] There are a great many dance songs for only certain men to dance. They are: songs for those who own the whips; for those who own the swords; for the one who owns a whistle; for those who were wounded in battle; for those who eat the dogs; for the man who owns the arrow; for those who were surrounded by enemies in battle; for those who did not run when fighting; for those who take down the women's war-bonnets; for those who gave many presents; for those who wear black clothing in the scalp dance; and for those who cut the ropes when stealing horses from the enemy's camp. A closing song is sung for those who were wounded in battle and who lead all the members out of the dance house.

This is what my mother learned about restrictions during 843
pregnancy:

"When a woman first knows that she is pregnant she has 784
to deprive herself of many things that she is used to doing.
For instance, she is not allowed to eat certain foods, like 843
heart and innards. The old people say that this will discolor 784
the mother's face. If she eats leg muscles they say she will have 262
cramps. If she eats brains, her child will have a snotty nose.
And she cannot stand in the doorway of her home to look 843
outside. If there is something she wants to see outside, she has 784
to go all the way out and stand there, not in the doorway. If
she didn't go all the way out she would have hard labor, they
said. Those old Indians were very strict with their beliefs.
Nowadays we would say they were superstitious. Back then
it was just their way of life."

My grandmother, AnadaAki, told me this story of her first childbirth:

"When I first thought I was pregnant I just looked at the
moon, and I started counting from there. I counted nine
moons, and on the tenth moon I went into labor. Some women 844
have a real hard time, and others find it easy. Myself, I went 845
into labor at night. I kept on with it all the next day, that
night, and on through the morning. It must have been near
noon when my baby was born. We just had our Indian doctors around, and they made brews for us. One of these doctors was called that final morning. My husband gave him his pick of the horses, for payment. When he had picked out his horse he came right in and prayed for me and doctored me. After that I started to feel good and cheerful.

"Right after the baby was born and taken care of, my mother started to clean me. After I was cleaned she started massaging my bones back into place. I was given some broth to drink and then she laid me down to rest. That first baby died because in the excitement my mother cut the navel cord too short and air got into the baby's stomach and killed it. If

861 some things, the parents would always tell them things like:
"Don't go away from the tipi or the wolf will come and take
you." They said; "Don't go around at night because that's
when the ghosts are out and they will come for you." Things
855 like this kept the little kids right close to home. If the mother
had to go somewhere on foot, she would carry along her
toddler wrapped in a blanket and worn on her back. Compared
to modern mothers, my grandmothers really indulged
in their children. The kids grew up in the midst of the daily
household, so they learned family values and customs naturally.

867 My grandmother told me the following story about her
childhood:

"I was the youngest of my mother's children. She wanted
us to grow old, so she encouraged us to follow her advice. She
taught us from the start to respect old people. Because my
father was a medicine man we had a lot of old people as visitors.
867 Sometimes my mother would give me a piece of meat
and tell me, 'Go ask that old lady to chew your food for you.'
264 This would be some special old lady—one with a lot of
888 power to doctor or put up Sun Dances. She would chew my
meat and then give it to me to swallow. This was a blessing
867 for me, just like getting part of her life. Whenever we had any
spare change we were taught to give it to old people like
that.

869 "Because a lot of holy people always came to visit my
784 father we were taught not to fool around near them. These
people who have spiritual powers are required to follow a lot
of rules. We were never allowed to pass in front of them,
especially if they were smoking. These were the rules and we
302 never thought to question them. My father painted his children
782 and his grandchildren, and he prayed for them, so that
no harm would come to them in case they passed in front of
him accidentally or did something else against the rules.

237 long were the best. For that reason the skins of young porcupines were preferred. Old porcupines are larger than young ones, and have larger, thicker quills. I understand that these tend to split more easily when they are flattened between the teeth. The ones around the rear part of the animal are the best. An easy way to remove them from the hide is to pull a gunny sack back and forth across it. The quills will stick into the sack, from which you can pull them back out without getting stabbed.

237 386 The quills were used in their natural shades and also dyed. Long ago they had only a few basic colors, like red, yellow, and green. Later on they learned how to use articles from the traders as sources for dye. A favorite was the red-wool trade cloth, which was soaked and boiled with such things as quills and feathers, to turn them red. Still later, the traders caught on and began stocking boxes of dye, which the people used straight and mixed to make many shades of, usually, bright colors.

294 784 Besides going through a traditional initiation, the Blackfoot quillworker is supposed to follow a number of rules. For instance, it is said that quillworkers go blind if they ever throw a porcupine quill into a fire, or if they do quillwork at night. It is also said that a quillworker will prick her fingers a lot with the quills if she sews any moccasins in her home. She is not supposed to eat certain food, such as porcupine meat, nor should she allow anyone to pass in front of her while she is quilling.

BEADWORK

294 531 The beadwork of my grandmothers is well known among students of Native culture for its pleasing colors and designs, along with its tight and smooth appearance. The traditional Blackfoot beading style is the appliqué stitch, which requires the use of two threads simultaneously. One thread is used

their way to Waterton and Banff National Parks 778
or to the famous Calgary Stampede in Canada. 823
Yet there are areas far enough away from the
speeding traffic for the Belly Buttes to remain the
isolated center of the Holy Spirit among the
Blood People. 823

The Power of the Buttes is felt by all who go 778
near them, even when there is no encampment in 776
progress. One winter a desperate family searched
an old Sun Dance campsite for firewood, which is [372]
scarce out on the prairie. This family discovered
they were using the fallen log of the sacred Center
Pole for fuel when they were awakened during
a cold night by an unseen Power singing the holy
Center Pole songs in a loud voice. Another time,
an enterprising rancher from our reserve began to
fence in the Buttes so that his cattle could graze
there. But he was discouraged from building his [784] ●
fence when strange sensations overtook him; older [782]
relatives reminded him that Holy Spirits must not
be disturbed without some sacrifice.

◆ 823

In 1972 the Sun Dance Encampment was 796
located near the edge of the flat that overlooks 778
the tree- and brush-lined Belly River bottoms. As [133]
the flat rises up from the river, the Belly Buttes
rise up from the flat, farther to the east. It is in [787]
those Buttes that many men have gone to find
their visions and Spirit helpers. Bears lived there [136]
not long ago. Today, eagles sometimes build their
nests there, and mountain lions cross tracks with
porcupines and coyotes. In some of the many [764]
caves and crevices are now the final resting places
of those Old People who passed away after laws
were made forbidding the traditional practice of
placing bodies near to the Spirit World on top of
scaffolds or in branches of trees.

It was still morning when we arrived at the 123
campground with our outfit. Our spiritual grandparents, 115
Mokakin and Ponah, pointed out a
vacant spot next to their tipi where they thought
we should camp. Mokakin, who was attending his 553
[554]

21: Hungry Wolf F-4,5 (ca. 1972) 1977
NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Blood

Outside it was dusk. We could hear a few 857 kids still playing. Their voices seemed distant, even though only a thin layer of canvas separated us from their vast outdoor playground. Here and there a dog barked, and from the nearby brush we could hear the whinny of a horse. A mother called for her children to come home and get ready for bed. Then we heard the voice of old Mokakin. 861 He called out for all to hear:

"All of you children who are still playing around the camp, all of you young people, hear me! This is a holy camp, and the older people [782] wish to pray now. They will be praying that all of you will live good lives and reach old age. You must help them by going to your homes and keeping quiet for the rest of the night. Tomorrow will be another day for playing and visiting with your friends. Mothers and fathers, see that your children are at home now, so that they will disturb no one in the camp."

Mokakin slowly walked around the camp circle while he talked. He was headed for the west side of the camp, toward Sun. He stayed close to the tipis, so that everyone could clearly hear his words. He was the main camp crier, often called [203] upon to make announcements for others.

Slowly Mokakin made his way back to our 291 side of the circle. He was wearing his very old Hudson's Bay point blanket, the kind with one black stripe instead of several colored ones. The blanket was wrapped around his body, over his left shoulder and under his right arm, allowing it to hang free. This arm he waved in the air, making 201 gestures to support his words. He came to the door of our lodge and coughed lightly, letting us 778 know that he was about to enter. From the reflection 784 ● of the fire on our tipi's walls he knew that we were still up. He did not know that we had been watching him through the small opening. Quickly, we rushed back to our seats and waited for his entrance. One of the many rules of respect shown to Medicine Pipe Bundles is that the Keepers must never call out to anyone from

[p. 8-A]

within the tipi where the Bundle is kept. Peace 778
and quiet should be maintained around such a 784
tipi at all times. If someone calls from outside and
does not come in, we must step outside to speak
with him. Mokakin, himself a former Medicine
Pipe Owner, was well aware of this rule.

"Oki, OmachKinna," I said to him, as he 576
came through the doorway. I used a standard 574
greeting of respect to an older man.

"Oki, Natosina ki SikskiAki," said Mokakin in return. He glanced around our tipi and said, "It's all fixed up now," giving an approving nod, then shaking his head to the side with pleasure. We felt happy and proud that our traditional Ways gladdened the old man's thoughts.

"Do you have time to sit and have a smoke and some tea?" I asked hesitantly. I knew that Mokakin was already serving as advisor, as grandfather, to the soon-to-be Horns. I wasn't sure how long he had for a visit with us.

No sooner had I asked the question than we heard Ponah's strong voice call out, "PitachPikis!" And for insurance she followed with, "Mokakin!" Knowing that there would be no excuse for not hearing his wife call at least one of his names, he apologetically mumbled something and hurried out. One of the future members of the Horns was probably waiting to be advised on some ceremonial matter. We knew that Mokakin would spend as much time at our place as he could, and we looked forward to his later visits.

Behind Mokakin's and Ponah's tipi was the 575
tipi of their son, Charlie Weaselhead. His parents 561
had given him the new white tipi to honor his [431]
joining the Horns Society. His joining meant a
lot to them. They had been members in the
past.

While sitting quietly in our tipi, we suddenly 533
became aware of a gathering of voices, soon fol- [534]
lowed by a few beats on a large bass drum. The [431]
camp was about to be entertained by "tobacco
singers," a group of friends who sit before the
door of a lodge and sing until the lodge owner

[p. 8-B]

21: Hungry Wolf F-4,5 (ca. 1972) 1977
NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Blood

the outside of the main bundle or slung over the 493
horse's back. Sacred Bundles were carried only on 492
a special horse and travois. Usually no one but the
Bundle's Owner could ride such a horse. Nor was [778]
that horse used to carry meat. This was to keep
the Spirit of the animal pure and clean for its [784]
holy duties.

The seven vowing Okan women and their 796
families were among the first to arrive at the 346
camp circle. They pitched their tipis closer to the
center of the circle than the others. Cottonwood [361]
boughs were piled up outside against the base of [824]
their tipis. In this way, people would know that these tipis were sitting holy and should not be disturbed. The green leaves hiding the bottoms of the tipis of these holy women served as spiritual guards for those who were within. Children were taught not to play nearby, lest they disturb the holy thoughts inside.

Dried tongue is the meal of communion dur- 796
ing the Medicine Lodge ceremony. One hundred 262
tongues must be dried and prepared beforehand 251
in the spring so that everyone in the camp can
share in this communion. The tongues, symbols [776]
of the natural foods of the buffalo as well as the main foods of our People, represent the Spirits of buffalo.

Traditionally, buffalo tongues were brought to the vowing holy woman by generous hunters.
With the help of her family, she dried and stored [793]
them in preparation for the holy ceremony. But by [178]
1892, beef had replaced buffalo in the diets of our
People, so beef tongues were used instead. (The 136
last buffalo killed by our People—around the year

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 24A]

they were the first to perform in the Medicine 575
Lodge. This was an opportunity for the societies 561
to inspire the People, as well as themselves, with 796
their ceremonies and comradeship. And it was an
honor for members to donate food to the gath- [431]
ered People, who were given good thoughts [556]
through the gesture.

After the presentation, the People were asked 796
to return to their lodges and spend the night
quietly. There was to be no noise, especially near [784] ●
the Medicine Lodge. The Weather Dancers were
fasting and meditating on the Holy Powers [791]
created by the sacred encampment. [785]

THE SELF-TORTURE CEREMONIES

Another group to participate in the Medicine 796
Lodge ceremony came to fulfill their own vows. 782
These were men who had made vows of physical
sacrifice in exchange for spiritual help from Sun. 785
Such vows were usually made during dangerous situations, perhaps on the hunt or warpath, when death seemed imminent. A vowing man might call out to Sun, "Help me, O holy Sun, my Father, and let me see you again with happiness. Give me your strength so that I may survive this danger, and I will give myself to you. I will help my People to remember your Holy Power by performing the physical torture dance during the next Holy Lodge ceremony of our People." Fulfilling such vows was truly a Sun Dance, and inspiring to those who watched.

WILSON'S OBSERVATIONS: 1892

The last time self-torture vows were fulfilled dur- 796
ing a Blood Medicine Lodge ceremony was in 785
1892. The days of warpaths were already past. Al- 657
though our young men still went on regular horse
raids then, there was seldom any fighting, even [178]
when the raiders were caught. Government agents [721]
knew that the self-torture ceremony inspired a
spirit of adventure, which they opposed. Follow- [182]
[177]

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 37A]

21: Hungry Wolf F-4,5 (ca. 1972) 1977
NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Blood

A man, Sum-a-ke, appeared in
the torture paint and, after sitting on the ground 796
for a few minutes, was punctured as usual and 785
*fastened to the ropes. I also took his photo but
the Sun was so low that the picture did not turn
out as well as the one the day before.*

The next day of the ceremonies turned out, 796
unexpectedly, to be the last day. Two unrelated 578
incidents caused camp to break: an undisclosed
dispute among the Horns and an unidentified
charge of adultery.

Monday. It was expected that the "Horned [575]
*Ones" would enter today but a dispute arose
among* [them], *one of their members taking
down his lodge, which formed half of the fraternal
abode, and moving from camp. The night before,* [684]
*a man accused one of the religious women of
the tribe of adultery* [this was a separate affair [793]
from the Horns dispute]. *He claimed he had seen
her at dusk indulging in immoral conduct with a
certain young man, the son of a prominent chief.
This caused a great commotion in camp, which
coupled with the trouble in the Horned Society,
had the effect of breaking up the camp, all dispersing
to the different villages up and down the
river.*

It may be added that the criminal affair mentioned, 793
which was for a long time the one interesting 578
topic of tribal talk, had a somewhat impressive 627
*ending. Sentiment was divided in regard to
the guilt or innocence of the woman, who declared
that her accuser was blasting her character
because she had repelled improper advances of his
own. She had hitherto bourne a good reputation;
in fact she had filled positions in religious rites
that only those who solemnly swore to their virtue
can occupy. The people therefore were loath to
misjudge the woman. The old men said, "Time* [784] ●
*will tell who speaks the truth; death inside of a
year is the penalty which all women pay who
make false vows; the young man commits an
equally serious crime who accuses a good woman
falsely, therefore the liar in this case must die
before the end of a year. It is not a long time to
wait* [and see] *which of them will it be." Strange
to relate, the woman died in childbirth in January
following above incident.*

The disagreements that brought the Okan of 796
1892 to an end did not affect most of the People.
They went back home with the Good Spirits that
had presided over the holy ceremonies. Disagree- [578]

(Text continued on Page 41-A] [178]

[p. 40-A]

the tipi and bedding were moved—back rests are 793
not used in the tipis of holy women. The tipi has 796
to have beds all around the inside because the [352]
holy men and the holy women gather there and
they take care of the tongues. A holy woman's [353]
travois, all painted, is also moved.

Many Kill covered her head when she took 793
the tongue, and she would not uncover her head 796
from then on. She would not see anybody, and 784●
nobody would see her face. Many Kill was a pious
woman from the time she took the tongue. Many
Kill's bed was made and then she was taken to
her tipi by the former holy women. She walked
very slowly across to her tipi. She could not look
around. If she were going to cough she would
cover her mouth with her hand so that the People
would not hear her coughing. That is how hard it
was to sponsor a Holy Lodge.

So, Many Kill was taken from the north side
across to her tipi. The virtuous women walked
with her. She sat on her bed. She did not braid
her hair. She did not have on wristlets; she wore
no necklace and no earrings. She had brought herself
into loneliness and she had no material things
to distract her.

The tongues had not been prepared beforehand, 796
since no Holy Lodge had been planned. 237
Now they had to be prepared in a hurry. They 252
were sliced very thin while a fire was built in the
fireplace. It was a small fire, just big enough to
heat the tongues. Tripods were set over the fire
where the tongues were hung to dry.

Many Kill was a pious woman from the time 796
she took the tongue. She is a tall woman. She is 793
not fat, just stout. Heavy Shield is tall, thin, and
left-handed. He suffered with his wife.

By the next morning the Horns Society preparations [575]
were finished. One of the Horns members
was sent to tell the holy woman that the Medicine [203]
Lodge ceremony could begin.

The messenger didn't have to wear holy moccasins. [292]
He wore his ordinary moccasins, a breechcloth,
and a robe. He ran to the Holy Lodge tipi.

[p.46-A]

21: Hungry Wolf F-4,5 (ca. 1972) 1977
NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Blood

dresser top was doubled by their reflection in the 123
dresser mirror. Three iron-frame beds took up 353
most of the floor space. An old man sat on each
of the beds. All three old men looked silently at [352]
us. I felt as though we had disturbed a harmonious
scene, which now awaited us to announce
why we came.

The Old Man was on the bed at the rear. He 123
squinted, trying to see who was at the doorway.
His many wrinkles and powerful features were all [302]
the more pronounced because his face was
painted with sacred red earth. The paint went up
into the forelock of his white hair. The forelock
covered where his hair was parted into two braids,
which fell over his ears. Pieces of red flannel cloth
were tied at the ends of his braids. He wore a long- [291]
sleeved flannel shirt, gray trousers, and an old pair
of buckskin moccasins. The toe of each moccasin [531]
was decorated with a yellow beaded flower and
green leaves.

When the Old Man learned we had come to
see him, he reached out his hand and we shook it
in greeting. The size and strength of his younger
years was still in the clasp of his hand. My lips
were dry and my knees were trembling, but I decided
to shake the hands of the other two men in
the room. I walked first to the one across from [784] ●
the Old Man, realizing too late that I had stepped
between the stove and the Bundles on the wall,
thus disturbing their sacred path. The two men
shook my hand. As one of them pointed out my
error, the feeling within the room became even
more Powerful. I had not been sure what to say
first to the Old Man. But, in apologizing for my
mistake, I explained the purpose of my visit—to
learn from him how to live in harmony with the
Spirit of the Old Ways. I told him that it would
be best for me to end our first visit right then,
and that I wished to come back at another time.
He replied, "If your desire to learn is strong
enough then I will look forward to your next
visit."

Once outside, this Powerful experience 114

[p.50-A]

21: Hungry Wolf F-4,5 (ca. 1972) 1977
NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Blood

LEGENDS OF NAPI

Our second evening of the encampment at the 124
Belly Buttes was beginning. We were in a mood
to hear some old-time stories, so we decided to
visit Mokakin and see if we could inspire him to
tell us some. It is a tradition among our People 784
that myths and legends should be told only at 538
nighttime. It is said that early blindness comes to
those who disobey this custom. [732]

Stories of war and adventure have always
been popular among our People, especially the 538
men. Women and children, too, have their favorites.
But the most well liked of all are the stories [773]
of our legendary Napi, or Old Man, whose mythical
experiences are exciting and occasionally
gruesome. Some of the most popular of them are
obscene.

The word *Napi* is used in a number of ways 192
in the Blackfoot language. It can mean "friend,"
if the *a* is pronounced "ah" and the *i* is drawn out
properly. A common greeting among acquaintances,
for instance, is, "*Oki, Napih.*" It may also [576]
be used to greet an old man, if the word is pronounced
with a longer "ah" and a very short *i*.
This generally refers to a very old man. A man
just old would be more commonly called *Omach-Kinna*,
which means something like "big-aged
man." Napi is pronounced with a short *i* when it
is used to refer to the Old Man of legend. Finally, 776
many of our People refer to our holy Sun as Napi, 773
or Old Man, in their prayers. Because of this and
the stories about Napi creating our part of the
world, many observers have written that our
People thought of Napi as God and prayed to
him. Long, long ago, it is likely that our People
believed that in the Sun was the spirit of an Old
Man, to whom they gave thanks for the beginning
of Earth. But the Napi of our myths and
legends is a humorous prankster and troublemaker.
He is not the Napi referred to in our
prayers.

[p. 51-A]

21: Hungry Wolf F-4,5 (ca. 1972) 1977
NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Blood

292
531

Iron and his last wife, Istsimpski, or "Hateful Face." She was the former wife of Ghost Chest and the mother of Charlie Goodrider. The photo was taken in 1939, a time when the ancient symbols on his beaded rifle were coincidentally used as swastikas by Nazi Germany. (Esther Goldfrank)

People still remember seeing him dance with the 796
sacred Pipestems. He would take the long, deco- 276
rated Stem and toss it up on his head, where it
would stay while he performed the sacred dance
of Medicine Pipe ceremonies. Most people who [784] ●
dance with a sacred Stem hold it very tightly with
both hands, for it is a sign of impending misfor-

[p.55-B]

tune if it should fall to the ground. Wolf Shirt 796
proved his Power by never letting a Stem fall 276
from his head. Mokakin and Ponah have seen [794] ●
him dance this way with all the Medicine Pipes
still left among our People.

Ponah told us that her father, as a young 595
man, was happily married to two sisters from the
North Piegan divison. After one of the sisters 587
died, Iron began investigating a young Blood
woman for his next wife. The surviving sister be- [586]
came jealous and left him. So he married the
Blood woman. She was the mother of Ponah and
her sister, Mrs. Red Crow. After his third wife
died he married the widow of Ghost Chest. She
was an older woman, called Istsimpski, or "Hate-
ful Face." Her son was Charlie Goodrider, who
was quite a romantic character.

Ponah asked Mokakin to tell us about her 721
father's horse raids. He related the time Iron was
with One Spot and Head Walking when they
raided the Crees. One Spot captured a Cree
Medicine Pipe, against Iron's insistence, while
Head Walking shot a Cree. Iron rode up to the
Cree, dismounted, stabbed the man dead, and
took his scalp.

As we talked, we began to hear singing 533
faintly coming through the rising and falling of
the wind outside. Slowly, the singing grew louder.

21: Hungry Wolf F-4,5 (ca. 1972) 1977
NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Blood

Another Day in Camp

The following day we had a number of visitors— 123
friends and relatives from the reserve. They
thought it great that we should still be carrying
on the tradition of coming together for the annual Sun Dance Camp in a holy place like the
Belly Buttes. Many acted like tourists, having no
conception of the spiritual meaning of the gathering. Several had to be asked to leave their chil- [784] ●
dren outside our tipi, for their running and noisy [778]
playing might have disturbed the Spirits of our
Bundle, and insulted the tradition surrounding
it. Some, however, including a few who don't follow the Old Ways, had a great deal of respect for
the holiness in our lodge.

GRANDMA ANADAAKI

One of the visitors who knew how to respect our 115
traditions had spent most of her eighty-four years
as a very progressive ranch wife on the reserve.
She was SikskiAki's grandmother, AnadaAki, or
"Pretty Woman." Between her name on the tribe [144]
rolls—Hilda Beebe—and her light complexion [551]
and gray-blue eyes, she would have been readily
accepted by those who hesitate to make friends
with our People.

Grandma's father was a German named Joseph Trollinger. He came here in the early days of the reserve and married Lucy, whose common

[p.57-A]

21: Hungry Wolf F-4,5 (ca. 1972) 1977
NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Blood

778
237

A few of the many personal Medicines at the Provincial Museum—skins of a weasel and a muskrat, along with a necklace with deer hooves and sacred bags.

The museum filmed, taped, and photographed 778
the ceremony. Ironically, it may be the best rec- 177
ord ever made of a Medicine Pipe ceremony. The 439
salary motivated some people to attend their first 796
ceremony in years. Others came to take this op- 432
portunity to again pray with our ancient, holy
Pipe. And there were those who were so offended, 114
they passed up this last opportunity altogether.

Our Old Man was at this last ceremony for the Long-Time Pipe. He had once led the ceremony for the Bundle's opening, and knew some of the special songs to be sung at the opening. The [784]

[p.85-B]

114
museum-official Owner offered him $250 to lead 778
the ceremony. In refusing, the Old Man explained 177
the following to us: "Our holy Pipes are very 439
Powerful. It is very wrong to do something un- 796
holy with them. Leading such a ceremony for that 432
white man, and accepting his money for doing it,
would be very unholy for me. No one can ever [784] ●
buy my holy life with money." The white man
later told people that the Old Man was incompetent and could not have led the ceremony anyway. He eventually recruited another old leader, Brown Chief Calf, to perform the ceremony.

One of the followers of our Old Ways who 778
was most upset by the sale of the Long-Time Pipe 177
was old Many Grey Horses. As a result of some 114
dreams, he and his wife paid a visit to the Pipe's official Keeper. This official recorded the visit and submitted it to his employers as an Ethnological Data Record. This is how it reads in the museum's files:

A Gift to a Medicine Pipe Bundle as a Result of a Visitation from a Supernatural Being

On October 9, 1968, I received as visitors, in my home at Cardston, Alberta, two Blood Indians, Mr. & Mrs. Many Grey Horses, who are current owners of a Medicine Pipe Bundle.

They explained to my wife, who acted as interpreter, that their visit was a serious one and not social.

Mr. Many Grey Horses spoke first. He repri- [796]
manded my wife for not sitting with me during [581]
the recent transfer ceremony of the Long Time Medicine Pipe of which I was the recipient. He said, "When two people are married they must sit together in all holy ceremonies. This is blessing their marriage." He said in the old days, Mrs. Standing Alone, who represented my wife during this ceremony, would have been recognized as my wife. My wife explained that she does not participate in these ceremonies for fear of ridicule. Mr. Many Grey Horses said, "You must not be afraid of that. It is a holy ceremony."

[p. 86-A]

Bundle then had no drums, his friend, Frank 778
Cotton's father, gave him 2 drums and Red 534
Crane's father gave him 2 drums. These drums 432
are not part of the Bundle.

Stephen Fox, who owned the Long Time 114
Medicine Pipe before John Red Crane, still had the original drums, and after the transfer to Red Crane, when Red Crane refused the drums, he consulted Many Grey Horses as to what should be done with the drums since Red Crane had refused them. Many Grey Horses then purchased the drums from Stephen Fox.

Many Grey Horses explained why some 796
people will not attend the transfer ceremonies 432
sponsored by the Provincial Museum. He said 778
that they believe that the ceremony is holy and 782
that the tape recorder is receiving the prayers and 784 ●
not the Creator. He said that when the bundle is 114
taken down the shaman [Medicine Man] smears [302]
blood clots all over his body and then takes the bundle down. He then stands and prays for the owner of the bundle, but the tape recorder is "sucking all the prayers" and the owner of the bundle who is being prayed for does not get the full benefit of the prayers and that is not right.

Three years later, in the spring of 1972, Sik- 778
skiAki and I, with a group of our Old People, 177
visited the Provincial Museum. Upon seeing our 114
ancient Pipe the Old People were moved, but were also dismayed to see it hanging open inside a glass case. The Bundle was not closed and the donated blanket not only was not covering it, it
wasn't even there. Museum officials unlocked the [782]
case so that we could pray with the Bundle and leave offerings of tobacco in it. Then we asked them to close the Bundle and remove it from display. While they debated our request, they showed us the film of the Bundle's ceremony. Before we left, the museum people assured us that it would no longer be left lying open and that they were prepared to bring the Bundle back to our reserve for a ceremony at any time. This latter assurance was a surprise, because the white-man

[p. 87-8]

21: Hungry Wolf F-4,5 (ca. 1972) 1977
NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Blood

cupied in singing and smoking. The dances are 796
usually held upon the day following the appearance 778
of the new moon, but I have known many to
be postponed for different reasons. The tom-tom [534]
is not used, rattles and whistles are the musical
instruments.

Early in the morning the i-o-kinu sends out a
boy or girl, or some member of his household, to
invite whoever he wishes to be present. These are
generally old and middle-aged men, some of
whom bring their wives. At the date of writing I
have attended three "moon dances" and remained
to the end of each, with book and pencil
in hand taking notes from which I hope to faithfully
describe what took place and to give as many
explanations as I have been able to obtain from
the performers. Two of the ceremonies which I 793
have witnessed took place in the home of Running 796
Wolf, one in his house and one in his lodge.
The third dance was conducted by Running Wolf 778
in the house of Three Bulls, another I-O-Kunt
who assisted. Running Wolf is considered the
most proficient of this class in this tribe, but he
has a superior in the person of the Blackfoot
[North Blackfoot] "Owl Child" who was master
of ceremonies upon the occasion that I saw the
dance in Running Wolf's lodge. This superiority [114]
consists simply in a good memory [Wilson had a
tendency to draw conclusions from outward appearances,
not from deep understanding]; 1st in
being able to lead their peculiar ritual all day long
without making errors, and 2nd, in being able to
begin without delay each song in its correct place.
When we remember the length of time the I-O-Keeme 793
sings, and that the songs are about one 796
hundred in number, nearly all of which are never 778
used upon any other occasions than "moon 533
dances," the use of a good memory is evident. [It
is likely that only one hundred songs were sung at
the ceremonies witnessed by Wilson. Even old
White Calf did not know all the songs. However, [784]●
due to some taboo, Beaver Men never allowed
anyone to count the songs; if they saw someone

[p.91-A]

asked, "How come your dad, Natosina, was able 561
to take care of both things properly—besides 575
learning other holy Ways?"

He replied, "You know we don't talk about
the Horns Society if we don't belong to it. There
is a lot of Power and secrets with that society. I've [784]
always been scared of their Power and I don't like
to have anything to do with secrets. Maybe I
couldn't keep secrets good enough. I always got
enough Power from my Medicine Pipes. And I
didn't have to keep any secrets with them."

Then he told us about the time he was almost captured to join the Horns:

"Back in the thirties, I was trying to live like [177]
a white man. I went to the Catholic church on
Sundays, and I worked on my farm all week long. [241]
I was a pretty good farmer. I had cattle and horses and farming equipment, and a lot of acres to work. I didn't even go to the Sun Dance Camps because that was during the busiest time of the farming season. Well, this one summer, I was cutting my hay, while most of the People were camped up here at the Buttes. I was at home, my wife was feeding me some dinner, when we saw a car drive up. I recognized the car from a distance; it belonged to a friend of mine. I got up and walked to the door to say hello to him. But before I opened the door my wife called, 'Wait, don't open the door. There's some men getting out of that car and they got blankets on!' I looked through the curtain just when one of them was taking a pipe from the car seat and hiding it under his blanket. I knew right away what they came for, so I ran to the back of the house and jumped out through an open window. I left my saddle horse just standing there by the house. I ran all the way back to where I was haying. My wife told them that I was working somewhere in the fields, so they left and drove to somebody else's house to try their luck. Gosh, if they had
caught me, I would have had to quit my farming
right then and move up to the camps. And I [425]
would have had to give up most of my horses to

[p. 105-B]

21: Hungry Wolf F-4,5 (ca. 1972) 1977
NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Blood

[Fred Eagle Plume] drew the buffalo on it. They 778
told me when the Sun Dance started they would 432
go there and set it up. I started bringing my hay [532]
to Bald Head. I worked hard and saved up nine
hundred dollars. Then word came that they had [454]
set up the tipi and that we should come to the
Sun Dance Encampment.

I got my money and bought the things for payments. The next day I went to camp. In the distance I could see the tipi. When I got there I moved right into it. The next day we went to get the horses I was going to give for payment. They were in the pasture of Camoose, my brother-in-law.

First we had to transfer the Buffalo Tipi to 778
me. Calling Last painted me for the tipi transfer 432
and led the ceremony. My relatives got out four 796
eagle headdresses. My brother said, "You will get [532]
painted for these. They will be transferred to [342]
you."

The next morning Heavy Head and Speaks-in- [302]
the-Middle [Iron] came with some others to capture me. They took me to the tipi where the Bundle was transferred. On the way, we stopped four times; each time there was a headdress for the Owner.

When they finished transferring the Bundle
we brought it home, and I asked Heavy Head if
he would finish the ceremony in my lodge. So
we had a dance with the Pipe. Then Heavy Head 778
initiated me to step over a dog, so that I would 432
be allowed to step over dogs from then on. They
brought a dog over in front of our tipi. Somebody 796
brought out a hot coal and placed it by the dog. 424
Heavy Head made incense with sweet pine and
held each of my feet over it four times. The
fourth time he told me to step over the dog. He
said, "Now you will not get hurt by touching a
dog or by being around one." But he said that [784]
dogs must never come into a tipi or house where
a Medicine Pipe is. That's the Old Way.

The next morning Heavy Head woke me up and gave me the right to get up. I was just like a

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 146-B]

21: Hungry Wolf F-4,5 (ca. 1972) 1977
NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Blood

child that was being taught how to do everything 778
the first time, my wife, too. He gave me the right 432
to smoke, then told me to go outside and look 796
around. I tried to look three times; the fourth 424
time I put my hand above my eyes and I looked
all around. That was to start out my first day as
a Ninamskan.

Heavy Head told me, "When you get home
from the Sun Dance you will make a sweat for me
and I will transfer to you the rights that I haven't
transferred yet." As soon as I got home, I built the
sweat lodge. After the sweat, Heavy Head asked
me to have a horse tied up so that he could give
me the right to get on a horse. I borrowed my
brother's [SikskiAki's father's] horse. Heavy Head [784]
told brother that the horse must never carry meat
after the initiation; he was going to be a holy
horse and would go lame if he carried meat. He
made incense and we did it the same way as with
the dog. Then he gave me the right to butcher
meat. He gave me the rights to do all the
important things in the Old Way of life.

Atsitsina also told an interesting story about this Pipe Bundle, involving the father and grandfather of our present head chief, Jim Shot-on-Both-Sides.

Oki, I will tell you a story about Backside-to- 778
the-Fire Pipe. It must be a very Powerful Pipe,
because it is still here, among our People. Even
our Long-Time Pipe is not here anymore. It was

[p.146-B]

21: Hungry Wolf F-4,5 (ca. 1972) 1977
NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Blood

Medicine Pipe Bundle. George First Rider's 778
father, Dog Child, had this Pipe for a short time,
and of course, George has a story to tell about it.

This Pipe was a man-made Pipe. It was con- 778
structed by Lone Invitation Caller. It was a Black- 276
Covered Pipe, constructed in a different way, like 531
a Water Bundle Pipe [a Beaver Bundle Pipe]. 237
Eagle tailfeathers strung together like a fan were attached to the Pipe. [The war Pipes that we call Black-Covered Pipes are basically like Beaver Pipes; neither has a fan of eagle feathers and both have Stems covered all over with eagle plumes. This Bad Medicine Pipe had a fan of eagle feathers and was placed inside a black covering.]

But the Pipe was useless. It was then called the Hairlock Pipe.

After Lone Invitation Caller had constructed 778
the Pipe, he gave it to his friend Bull Limper 425
(Spear Chief). Lone Invitation Caller didn't perform a miracle with the Pipe, he just transferred the Pipe at the home of Spear Chief. It takes four days to transfer a Medicine Pipe, but Lone Invitation Caller didn't transfer his Pipe in the proper manner.

Before winter came, Spear Chief's wife died. 778
Then he realized that the Pipe was a fake, so he 784
cut the tails from the beaver pelts and sold them. A little while later Spear Chief died, and his son, White Leggings (Harry Spear Chief), kept the Pipe. White Leggings took sick and he almost died. Then he gave it to Little White Weasel Calf [Dog Child, George's father]. But I told him, "Put that Pipe away, it's a fake!"

So the Pipe was taken across the U.S. border, and it was there for a year. Nobody ever bought the Pipe because it was newly made. Then it was brought back and Little White Weasel Calf gave it to Little Eagle Ribs [Joe Eagle Ribs]. Right after Little Eagle Ribs took the Pipe, Little White Weasel Calf's wife died, and pretty soon he did, too. Little Eagle Ribs took the Pipe, and before it was transferred to him, he died. His

[p. 165-A]

*stepson [Sam Hairy Bull, who sold Eagle Ribs' 778
Beaver Bundle to Edmonton] took the Pipe. The 784
boy got drunk and gave the Pipe to Calling Last
for some liquor. Calling Last found out that the
Pipe was a fake, so he went and sold it in Browning, Montana. And that was the end of it.*

A BAD PIPE FROM THE GHOSTS

Our People fear the mystery of ghosts. They be- 778
lieve that ghosts are able to make living souls go 775
along with them to the Sandhills, where all ghosts
of Blood People are thought to dwell. One Blood
man went with the ghosts and returned with a
Medicine Pipe they had given him. This story has 778
become a popular legend among our People. Here 539
is Mokakin's version: 773

This Medicine Pipe had the name Shaggy Medicine Pipe because it was all covered with eagle plumes that stuck way out. The Pipe was so new, the plumes weren't flattened from being wrapped for a long time.

*Oki, this took place a long time ago—I don't
know how many years. A man came back home
from his war trail and found that his wife was
already dead and buried. He had loved her very
much and he became very lonely for her. Every
night he went up on a hill and cried and mourned.
One night a ghost came and spoke to him. "If
you want to visit your wife I can take you to her.
You've got to bring some tobacco for an offering.
But don't bring any weapons or anything made* [775]
*out of metal." Ghosts don't like metal. The man
went home and took off his knife and his rings
and he picked up some tobacco. Then he went
back up the hill.*

The ghost took the man a long ways through the dark, over hills and across rivers. Finally they came to a big open place where there was a big tipi camp. The ghost stopped in front of one of the tipis and told the man to go inside and wait. Inside, another ghost was sitting at the back. The

21: Hungry Wolf F-4,5 (ca. 1972) 1977
NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Blood

finished his wife's body sat up and she came back 778
to life. They held each other and he kissed her. 539

After the man and his wife were home for a 773
while he began to make up the Medicine Pipe that the ghost gave him. For several years his wife took care of the Pipe and they lived pretty good. The man was happy to have his wife back and he treated her very well. Then, one night they had a lot of guests in their tipi and his wife was cooking some food. Just when it was ready to eat, she knocked it over and spilled it all in the fire. The man lost his temper and shouted at her, "What's the matter—can't you do anything right, you ghost woman!" His wife jumped back on her bed and covered up her head with her shawl. The man told her to get up and clean the spilled food. When she didn't get up, he went over and pulled her shawl off. Underneath the shawl there was only the skeleton of his wife.

Not long after that the man gave up his [784] ●
Shaggy Pipe to somebody else. Then he died. The one he gave the Pipe to also died. Some more people had the Pipe, and each time they died when they got it or soon after they gave it up. Finally a chief took it to see what he could do. When he died, the People said, "This Pipe came from the ghosts and everybody that has it becomes a ghost, so we better give it back to the ghosts." So they buried the Shaggy Pipe with the chief and they never made it up again. Everybody talks about it since then.

THE BLACK-COVERED PIPES

There was once another kind of Medicine Pipe. 778
These were covered with dark-colored cloth and accompanied by a few accessories in a rawhide bag. They were used to inspire spiritual power for an individual or for a society in times of war. The People did not look to these Pipes or their Owners for everyday spiritual help.

There used to be many of these Black-Covered Pipes, but none remain with us today. Most of their individual origins and ceremonies

[p. 166-B]

21: Hungry Wolf F-4,5 (ca. 1972) 1977
NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Blood

[Horns Society Transfer Ceremony, 1891]

head-dress to Spotted Bull, because the final dance had to be led by the regalia. Around the circle they rapidly hopped. The Leader was closely followed by two of the other large war bonnets, the 4th one along circling in the opposite direction and outside the rest. 575 796 432 535

A dense crowd had gathered about the dance by this time. After dancing around the circle several times, the leader made a feint to go through the crowds of people at the east and each time he came around he danced a little closer, being driven back through by the boys and young men who shook their blankets at him as they would at an animal. Someone handed Spotted Bull a rifle and the next time he came around to the East, he, still hopping, charged right at the people. Blankets were shaken in his face and the crowd did not give way for him until he fired a shot over their heads, at which all fell back allowing the procession to dance out into the open ground. The assembled crowd now dispersed.

The Society returned to where they had been sitting and waited there until the lodges of two of their members were taken down in the camp and moved over to them by the women. The members then took charge of the material of the two lodges and out of it constructed one big oblong lodge into which they entered. This was their permanent abode for the remainder of the time the Bloods were in camp. This society did not dance again, but religious duties and the rites were performed by them every day afterwards. Such is the dance of the mysterious order of Atskiniax, about whose sacred rites the middle-aged will talk in whispers to you, telling you every few minutes that it is very dangerous to talk about it at all. 575 796 [346] [784] ●

OUR OWN HORNS TRANSFER

The new Horns have made a concerted effort to regain the respect of the People and to learn as much about the Ways of their society as they can from former members who are still living. They 575 186

[p.210-A]

liver on the table, and a glass of water. Then she sang some songs. She told us to turn the lights off. She sat there quietly and we all waited. Pretty soon the dogs started barking outside and there was a noise like someone running up to the house and breathing hard. It was a ghost! 791 787 [237]

The old lady told the ghost, "Oki, there is some water for you. Drink it." There was a sound like glass tinkling against something solid. Then she said, "Oki, there is some food for you." There were more funny noises. Then she offered the ghost a smoke and we could see the tobacco being smoked. Then she told the ghost what the problem was, and asked him to go and look for the boy's knife. The old lady told us to turn the lights back on. Nobody was there and all the food and water were gone.

A while later the dogs started barking again. The old lady said to hurry up and turn the lights off. Then we heard a loud thumping noise. After that she offered the ghost another smoke and then he left. We turned the lights back on and found the knife lying on the floor. I know that old lady was very Powerful because everybody saw this happen. She didn't know where the knife was and she never left us to go and get it.

Natosina was kept so busy with his sacred duties that he never cared much for the modern ways that were coming to our People. Most of his visitors followed the Old Ways. His Powers were so strong and had so many obligations associated with them that others were afraid to come near him. Whenever he had a bad dream he would call his children and grandchildren to him, as well as any other nearby relatives, and pray for them while painting their faces with sacred red earth. 793 [177] [787] [782]

One of his dream obligations required that he never be interrupted while smoking. He communicated with Spirits then, and an interruption might break his contact and leave his Spirit outside his body. 793 276 784 [787]

One time SikskiAki's father and uncle, when

21: Hungry Wolf F-4,5 (ca. 1972) 1977
NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Blood

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302
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Natosina (Son Chief) or Eagle Plume, as he was in 1920's. The shirt was his prize one, decorated with locks of hair from friends and relatives. (Glacier Studios)

---

they were little boys, found out what might happen if Natosina were interrupted while smoking. The two boys had been out for some time chopping firewood. It was a cold day and they were tired, so they eagerly headed for the warm house.

793
276
784 ●

[p.265-A]

When they got there the door was closed and 793
blocked from inside. Bernard told his brother, 276
Edward, "Darn it, that old man is smoking again 784
and I'm cold and want to go inside." They stood
around for a few minutes and then Bernard suddenly
pushed hard on the door and opened it up.
Natosina was sitting in a chair near the door, his
pipe in hand. As they came through, the pipe fell
and his head fell forward; blood trickled from the
side of his mouth. His old wife told the boys to
hurry and close the door and then to stand still.
She began to sing the song of his sacred Power [533]
and pretty soon he lifted his head, looking somewhat
dazed. While the boys looked on in amazement, [755]
Natosina coughed loudly, his hand held in [302]
front of his mouth. He took the hand and rubbed
it on his forehead, which became covered with
sacred yellow paint. He coughed again into his
hand and wiped it on one of his cheeks; it became
covered with sacred red paint. One more time he
did this, covering his other cheek with red paint.
Then he told the boys, "Don't walk in like that
again when you know I'm smoking. I might not
be able to come back next time."

STORIES OF WEASEL TAIL

A contemporary of Natosina was Apachsoysis, or 159
"Weasel Tail." Although he knew a great deal
about our sacred ceremonies, he was not a leader.
His fame rested on his fearless bravery. He was [554]
also noted for being something of a historian, as
well as a great comedian who specialized in tall
tales.

Weasel Tail was born in 1859. When he became [177]
orphaned, he wandered and ended up living
for a time among the Crow People. He was still [721]
young when he married his only wife, Hate
Woman, who went with him on several of his war [562]
parties. Like his partner, Bird Rattler, Weasel
Tail went back to Crow camps during some of his
later horse raids. During one horse raid, he was [727]
caught with Bird Rattler and imprisoned at Fort

CONTINUED ON PAGE 267-A]

[p.265-B]

*to try and get their sacred Bundles back. A Medicine 829
Pipe Owner we used to think was very holy. 771
He dressed holy and acted holy. Nowadays they [177]
don't behave like the ones from the past. The
People don't find them very holy any more. . . .
But maybe things will get better again. If we start
to live a holy life again, maybe there won't be so
many deaths. In the past there were not many
sudden deaths; the People lived in a holy way
then. . . . In the Old Days the Old People often
followed both religions. They liked to go wherever
there was praying. Now not only the Indian religion
is being forgotten, the white religion is
falling the same way.*

ALBERT CHIEF CALF

Two of our Old People who still attend every 887
ceremony are Mr. and Mrs. Albert Chief Calf.
The old man was born in a tipi in 1895. He is 551
known by his father's name, NinnaOnesta, or [553]
"Chief Calf"; his other name is Wrapped Up. His
wife's name is Little Nice Face. The two make a 142
distinctive couple on their daily walk through
town—he is over six feet tall and sturdy-looking;
his wife is quite short and plump. He usually 291
wears an old black cowboy hat with an eagle
plume attached; she always covers herself with a
woolen shawl.

Although NinnaOnesta has attended ceremonies 793
of our Old Ways all his life, he has been
leading them for only the past few years. Last
winter he alone led more Nighttime ceremonies
than all the other leaders. He is always available
for praying and is very easy to please and willing
to please. He wears sunglasses because of his poor 151
eyesight, which allows him to overlook details and
distractions that would bother other leaders.

NinnaOnesta went on a number of raids during 721
his young days, but like most of our Old 784
People, he has said, "I can just talk about my
raids when I am confessing them during holy
ceremonies. I can't talk about them just any-

[p. 333-B]

time." He went on his most notorious raid with 721
the late Henry Standing Alone. They were dis- [784]
covered trying to steal horses and a gunfight fol-
lowed, but no one was seriously hurt.

NinnaOnesta transferred his last Horns 778
Bundle during the Sun Dance last year. He said 575
he had had it for thirty-two years. He has also
been a member of the Horns Society five times.
"Being a Medicine Pipe Owner and belonging to
the Horns both brought me a lot of happiness.
They are both the same to me. You can see how [855]
many children and grandchildren I have around
me. They were all raised safely because we took
good care of our holy things. We raised our kids
by them."

All winter long he looks forward to the re- 796
turn of Thunder. "I really enjoy Medicine Pipe 778
ceremonies. I wait with happiness for Thunder to
come so that I can get ready for the Pipe dances
again. I really feel good going to them." He
owned one Medicine Pipe Bundle for "many
years." He said it was "the one that crazy Black [439]
Plume kid sold to that white man that's trying to
get all our holy things away from us."

NinnaOnesta and his wife would like to see 829
the Old Ways kept up properly by the young.
"These young people that are trying to follow the
Indian Way. It is very good. There is nothing at
all wrong with it. It is very good for them." Asked
if he had any advice to offer to young people, he
replied; "If one of them will come to me for advice, I will tell them how to live. But no one has
come to me, so far."

BOB BLACK PLUME

Apikayi, or "Skunk," is a short, little man in his 793
mid-seventies who has a smile and handshake for
anyone who passes him. Some of our People refer
to him as "the preacher," because he is involved
in all sorts of religious affairs, from Horns Society
to Full Gospel and the Catholic Church. Perhaps [291]
to suit that title, he is usually well dressed in a

21: Hungry Wolf F-4,5 (ca. 1972) 1977
NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Blood

treat me good. Some from Gleichen [North 793
Blackfoot] asked me to lead the Medicine Lodge 558
ceremony that they were going to give down here 156
last summer. I told them that I would, because 829
my relatives on both sides took part in Medicine
Lodge ceremonies in the Old Days. One time I [578]
was in a restaurant in town and Wolf Old Man
[our Old Man] came in and saw me. He came
over and asked if it was true that I was going to
lead the Okan. I told him it was. Then, right in [784]
front of everybody, he told me that I had no right
to lead that ceremony and that I didn't know
enough about it and might hurt others who were
taking part in it. But that isn't true. I know most
of the songs from it and I know what to do to
lead it. He's just mad because his brother [Crow-Spreads-His-Wings] used to lead them and he
studied for a long time before he could do it.
I can open a Beaver Bundle, too, even though I
never had one. My father had one and my wife's
father [Tough Bread] had one and I learned the
songs from them.

The reason my songs are different from every- [533]
body else's is that I had a different Teacher. Most
of the ones who lead the Medicine Pipe ceremonies learned their songs from Heavy Head, but
I learned them from Tough Bread. I'm the only
one still living who learned them from him, so
I'm the only one who sings them that way.

The reason why I sell my things is because I [425]
believe in the Old Ways. In the Old Days, when
the Old People were asked for something holy [778]
they always gave it, they never held back, and
I am the same way. The white men sometimes [439]
want the holy things much more than an Indian
will want it, so I let them have it to make them
happy. The Crow Beaver Bundle that I sold was
not being used any longer by the People. My
sons sold the Medicine Pipe and the Horns Society Bundle. They didn't ask me about it before
they did it, so I am not to blame for that. I always [782]
pray for my family and for anyone that needs my
prayers. I am not stingy with them. The Creator

hears my prayers whether I say them at a Night- 793
time ceremony or at the Catholic Church or dur- 558
ing a Full Gospel meeting. I am not shy to pray 156
any place. That is how I live. 829
[782]

MARK OLD SHOES

Mark Old Shoes, or Rusty Boy, is probably the 793
youngest and healthiest of our Old People. He is
learning to lead some of the ceremonies, mainly
our Nighttime ceremonies and Medicine Pipe
Bundle openings. He is also head Weather [535]
Dancer on the Blood Reserve, in case there is ever
another Medicine Lodge ceremony.

Mark's father was the famous warrior Morn- [551]
ing Writing, who was registered on the agency
rolls by his earlier name, Old Shoes. Morning [871]
Writing raised his children in the Old Way and
did not allow them to go to school. When Mark [177]
was twelve years old, his father died and he was
sent off to school, where they forced him to cut [302]
his braids. Since then he has always worn short
hair.

Mark has been a member of the Horns So- 575
ciety three times, once as a bachelor and twice
with his wife. The first time he joined as partner [425]
to the Owner of one of the leaders' staffs. At later
times he owned the Staff-with-a-Rattle and the
Headdress-with-an-Arrow-in-Front. As he looked 829
through the photographs of past scenes he had 178
some comments: "I find it strange how much
everything has changed. For instance, in those
days the Old People all allowed their pictures to
be taken at the Sun Dance. Now, if anyone is [784]
seen with a camera, the Horns will sure get after [575]
him."

Like many of our Old People, Mark has 829
much faith in the new Horns to help keep our
Old Ways alive. He has said, "I think that as long 575
as the new Horns really believe in what they are [182]
doing, our Old Ways will keep going. Young
people didn't care much about the Old Ways, [178]
lately, when it was just us Old People. But now a
lot of young people are thinking about trying to
join us. [P. 335-B)

was hard for me to go back to my brother-in-law 778
and tell him that he couldn't take the ancient 432
Pipe because that white man was going to take it 829
to Edmonton." He added, "It was just as hard for
me when John Red Crane asked me to drum for [439]
him at the transfer. I didn't believe in it at all, [796]
but by the rules of our Old Ways, I couldn't
refuse. He was my relative and I knew the songs. [533]
I lost my son not long after that. Just about [784]
everyone who was at that transfer suffered some
misfortune soon afterwards, especially John."

Mark's father-in-law was old Long-Time 778
Squirrel. He died while he was still Owner of the 425
Different-People Pipe. At that time his son was
not prepared to take the Pipe, so Mark's mother- [768]
in-law asked him if he would take it, since it could not stay in the home where a member of the family had died. So Mark and his wife took it to their home, and had it transferred to them during the following Sun Dance.

Mark is the Weather Dancer as the result of 535
a relative's dream. A woman named Prairie 793
Chicken Calling was visited by a holy man while 787
she was sleeping. The holy man pointed into the distance and asked, "Do you recognize that man over there?" The man was Mark, dressed as a Weather Dancer. The holy man said, "I am telling you that if that man becomes the Weather Dancer and devotes himself to his duties, he will have a long life."

The woman told Mark about her dream. She
said, "Please pity me, relative, and do as my
dream instructed." Mark spoke to the Old Man, [425]
who was then the Weather Dancer. The Old
Man agreed to transfer his rights during the next [424]
Sun Dance. Mark has been Weather Dancer at
three Sun Dance ceremonies so far. He said,
"That's the most Powerful thing that I have, [886]
now. It's my life, and I will live by it so that I can
reach old age."

[p. 336-B]

Today, Yellow Horse Rider lives with his 156
family in a modern home on the same land his
father owned, at the south end of the Belly
Buttes near the Belly River. Except for singing at
summertime powwows and at an occasional
Medicine Pipe ceremony, he is very shy and quiet.
So many sacred things have been transferred to
him that he can sing the required sixteen songs at
our Nighttime ceremonies. But he says he does
not like to attend unless the sponsor of the ceremony
specifically asks him to. This is a traditional
custom.

Yellow Horse Rider has said, "I live the Indian 829
Way. That is the Way in which I was raised
and it is the only Way I know how to live. I only
do those things that I am meant to do, and I try
very hard to do them right. I have a lot of children. [784]
If I don't treat my Indian Ways right, it
might hurt them."

JOE YOUNG PINE

About ten years after the last real war party, one 156
of old Young Pine's two wives gave birth to a son, [551]
whose name became Joe Young Pine. He is
known today as Dog-With-a-White-Spot, one of
his father's names. He is most often seen around
the reserve while traveling in the ditches next to
the roads. That is because he is one of the last to
use a team and wagon. Here is what he says about
that simple method of travel:

Very few people on this reserve had an automobile 829
when I first got one. I was still young, 493
*then. Now that most everybody has at least one
auto or truck, I'm back to using my team and
wagon. I like it real well. I'm never in a hurry
and I always have time to stop and visit with
whoever I want to. I don't just go by in a cloud
of dust. Of course, I like it because it's cheap,
too. I never have to worry about gas money or oil
changes or stuff like that. When there's any drinking* [273]
going on around the house I don't have to [164]

looks so clean and new. When we said yes, she 778
told us this story: One time Ponah was visiting
the Red Crows. She knew her sister was always a
good housekeeper and never liked to see dirty
things around. When the Red Crows had gotten
their Pipe, the old shawl covering it clearly
showed its many years of protecting the Bundle.
So during this visit, when Ponah noticed her sister
washing what looked like the Bundle's shawl, she
went to look at the Bundle and saw that an ordinary
blanket was covering it. "You must be [784] ●
crazy," she told her sister. "Do you want us all to
drown in a big thunderstorm? You're not supposed
to wash holy things like that!" Poor Mrs.
Red Crow felt very badly. She had never been
told such a thing.

Now she holds sacred duties as the Scabby 793
Bull for the Motokiks, a position transferred to
her a few years ago by Doreen Day Rider, the [425]
previous Scabby Bull. [424]

MRS. ROSIE DAVIS

Mrs. Rosie Davis is the oldest person on the 165
Blood Reserve.

I don't know how old I am. Nobody ever told me the exact year of my birth. People usually say that I am one hundred years old, and they are probably right. I was still a little girl when the 1877 Treaty was signed.

*I was born in Fort Benton. My mother married 582
a white man named Smith, who worked on
a Missouri River steamboat out of Fort Benton.
We lived there when I was young; my father 648
would come to see us between trips. My mother's
father, Iron Pipe, took my mother and me up to
the Blood Reserve so that we would be registered
on the band rolls for the signing of the 1877
Treaty. He told my father he would try to send
us back down to Fort Benton somehow.*

*When the treaty was finally settled, my grandfather 586
could not find anyone to accompany us*

tained all the prayers, at this time, and was taken 796
out and tied to a tree or left amid rocks. The 788
bunches of sage were used to keep the bad Spirits, 782
which was the purpose of this ceremony, from
remaining behind to trouble the occupants of the
lodge any further.] Tea and berries were now [272]
handed around. Ended at 5 p.m. [262]

That ceremony was similar to our Nighttime 776
ceremonies of today, except that it ended after
the details of the introduction were completed;
there was no singing of transferred songs.

Here is an interesting excerpt from Wilson's [127]
notes on a ceremony that took place on July 28,
1891. It illustrates the earnestness and the faith of
the participants.

> A woman . . . entered the lodge . . . stat- 796
> *ing that a relative of the devotee's, a brother who* 302
> *was ill in an adjoining lodge, wished to partake of*
> *the sacred facial decoration. As the man was in an*
> *advanced stage of consumption the priest made*
> *no answer at first but grumbled in an undertone*
> *to the effect that people must think him possessed of superhuman power. After a moment's*
> *thought, he gave a reluctant consent and the sick*
> *man entered and was painted as the rest. . . .*
> *The priest afterwards explained to me that that* [751]
> *sick a man should not have requested the paint-*
> *ing of himself, because the immediate object of* [784] ●
> *the sacred face-painting was to ensure good health* [771]
> *and long life to the participant; and that the*
> *painting of the face of a person who was visibly*
> *dying was in his eyes almost an act of sacrilege,*
> *hence his reluctance to make a mockery of a ceremony the efficacy of which he, the priest, firmly*
> *believed in.*

Wilson himself once used offerings in our 789
Old Way to overcome a problem. This story
comes from Atsitsina.

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 349-B]

21: Hungry Wolf F-4,5 (ca. 1972) 1977
NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Blood

[Nighttime Ceremony, Ca. 1972]

prayed that the weather would be mild, which it 796
was, on the day of the ceremony. There was snow on the ground from a few days before, but the air was barely cool enough for freezing.

The ceremony was to have been held seven [765]
nights before, but a sudden death among the Old Man's relatives meant that he could not attend any public gathering for four days. He told us that everyone's good Spirits would be back if we set the ceremony for seven days later, which we did.

I wore my blanket coat for the ride over to our relative's house, where the ceremony was held. We had driven over there earlier that morning to drop off mattresses for seating, dishes for cooking, the foodstuffs, and our blankets and other things needed for the ceremony. We fastened the offering to the house wall outside the place where the Old Man was to sit and pray later that night.

It was still daylight when we arrived at the house where people were going to gather. No one had arrived yet. The offering swayed in the breeze that often blows from the mountains. The prairie between the house and the mountains, perhaps half a day's ride away, was a patch-work of farms and ranches. The light covering of snow reflected differently, depending on whether the fenced sections of land were for pasture or crops, and whether they were plowed at the end of the last summer or left with their stubble standing.

The house was an older one, made of milled [342]
lumber. A few relatives were inside, to do the cooking and to lend their help, should it be
needed. The room was crowded with many bags [353]
and boxes of food. Another room was crammed with furniture, leaving the room where the ceremony was to be held cleared of all furniture—only mattresses covering the floor along the walls. Two of the canvas linings from our tipi hung on the wall to lend the room some atmosphere.
None of the relatives took a direct part in the [778]
ceremony, so none had gone inside this room for [784]
fear of disturbing its sanctity.

[p. 350-B]

539
182

It may not be out of place to give our impression of the position these tales occupy in Blackfoot culture. While their mythology certainly stands for a part of what we know as the literature of a people, it does not by any means comprise the larger part; for historical, military, adventurous, ceremonial, and other forms of narratives there are in profusion. It will be noticed that the narratives in our collection correspond in general style to what we recognize as fiction. The attitude of the Blackfoot people toward these narratives is difficult to reduce to accurate statement, but one gets the impression that they are often valued more for their æsthetic factors than otherwise. Yet the active elements of this mythology seem to function in mythical characters so firmly fixed in folk-thought, that each may be regarded as a reality. One also gets the impression, after some familiarity with the serious life of these people, that mythical characters are generally accorded the same reality as pertains to a deceased friend. The most venerated of these are Sun-Man, Moon-Woman, Morning-Star, the Thunder, Scar-Face, the Seven-Stars, the Pleiades (Bunched stars), Otter-Woman, Elk-Woman, the Old Man, Blood-Clot, Scabby-Round-Robe, the Woman-who-Married-the-Star, and the Woman-who-Married-the-Buffalo. All are regarded as having made at least some important contribution to the welfare of the people. Naturally, not all are of equal rank; the Sun, Moon, Thunder, and Morning-Star being of very great power and supernatural significance. An exhaustive collection of Blackfoot narratives would doubtless contain numerous and various versions of the doings of these and other minor characters. Taken collectively, these characters give the sanctions for many practices and beliefs. That they are strictly moral sanctions is doubtful, since they seem to have prescribed the formal parts of ceremonies and worship rather than ethical procedure. Anyway, to the present Blackfoot mind, the moral lives of these characters are not always exemplary. The Old Man is held in contempt, and one may hear such expessions as "I do not hold Scar-Face in esteem, because, while he did a great thing, he did it for spite." However, a full discussion of these characters must be deferred until we have presented the details of ceremonial practices and beliefs.

784
171

So far as we know there are no restrictions against the telling of myths at certain times of the year. There is no detailed myth which can be narrated only to select audiences, as among the Arapaho, Cheyenne, and Dakota, — myths that have so far not been recorded. Neither are their myths peculiar to women or men, as the case may be, any one being at liberty to render any myth whatsoever. However, persons not versed in a ritual are often reluctant to narrate the myth accounting for its origin, because in a general way it is improper for one to speak in detail of medicines concerning which

796 tion of her office as the information at hand allows. In the first place, a
793 sun dance cannot occur unless some woman qualifies for the office. On the
other hand, it was almost inconceivable that there should be a summer in
796 which such a qualification would not be made. This attitude of our inform-
ants implies that public opinion had sufficient force to call out volunteers
793 against their own wills. There was a feeling that an annual sun dance was,
626 from a religious and ethical point of view, necessary to the general welfare,
for which some individual ought to sacrifice personal comfort and property
to the extent required by custom. As we shall see later, this was no small
price to pay for a doubtful honor. This feeling was sure to express itself
in the subtle ways peculiar to Indian society, if need be, to the direct sugges-
tion of a candidate who in turn felt impelled to come forward as if prompted
entirely from within.

796 As a rule, however, the woman qualifies by a vow. Oftimes, when a
782 member of the family is dangerously ill, one of the women goes out of the
tipi and raising her eyes to the sun calls upon it that health may be restored
793 to the ailing one. In such an appeal she offers to make gifts to the sun,
usually specifying that she will sacrifice a piece of cloth, a dress, a robe, an
ax, etc., which are after a time, provided the sick one improves, hung in
trees or deposited upon a hill. Such appeals are still made with great
frequency. It is believed that unless the woman has been industrious,
truthful, and above all, true to her marriage vows, her appeal will not be
answered. Sometimes, when the woman addresses the sun she promises
to be the medicine woman at the next sun dance. She herself may be ill
and promise such a sacrifice in case she receives help. Again, she may, out
of gratitude for the satisfactory way in which her prayers have been an-
swered, announce her intention to take this step. In such a case, a formal
announcement is made to the sun. In company with a man, usually a
[756] medicineman experienced in the ceremonies, she steps out into the camp,
where they face the sun whom the man addresses, explaining that as this
woman asked for help in time of need and that inasmuch as it was granted,
she in turn promises to be the medicine woman at the first opportunity.
Some such formal announcement is made in every case where the prayers
have been answered. By this formality, the vow receives public registry.

As indicated above, the prayers are not always granted. In such cases,
the promises are not only not binding, but to proceed with the sun dance,
or to take a secondary part in it, would be to the detriment of all concerned.
● [784] The fault is said to lie in the woman's life and that only the wrath of the sun
would be invoked by her participation in the ceremonies.

It may be asked if a man can make such a vow. He may and does often call upon the sun, promising gifts of property or even scalps and may promise and first takes the painted tongue and then all the others and hangs them 796 [533] up as before. This ends the ceremony.

Two days later, the same participants are called together to the same tipi and the woman rises and takes first the painted tongue and then the others from where they were hung. A parfleche is brought and a buffalo song [533] sung: "Buffalo I take. Where I sit is powerful." The painted tongue and then the others are placed on the parfleche. Wild peppermint is put [263] in with the tongues, the parfleches are tied up and placed at the rear of the tipi. Sometimes tongues are dried in front of the tipi on a stage made by [251] setting up two travois with a lodge pole tied between them.

The man and woman who lead the ceremony must not have any metal [823] about them. Brass rings, earrings, and all such trinkets must be taken off. [301] Nor must there be any knives in the vicinity. Even the knives with which [784] the tongues are cut are taken out. No one must spit in front of him, but always close to the wall under the beds. If they do, it will rain. No water [821] is brought into the medicine lodge and when water is brought, it is covered. The only time when it is permitted to eat or drink is before sunrise and after sunset. They must be given food by the instructors. The prayers in this [782] ceremony are prayers for good luck for everyone in the camp.

This closes the preliminaries to the ceremonies leading to the sun dance 796 and may be designated as the cutting of the tongues. As in most other cases, 178 there seems to have been considerable variation in this procedure, both as to time and order. Certainly, for a number of years, it has been much abbreviated. As implied in the program, this ceremony may be performed on the first day. The gathering of tongues was dependent upon circumstances and after the days of the great buffalo drives was a matter of gradual accumulation. Thus, it was explained, that by necessity, the "cutting" was often repeated, though naturally with less ceremony.

The parfleches containing tongues are kept in the medicine woman's 796 tipi where they are "prayed and sung over" during the first and second days 178 of the program. The underlying thought seems to be that they are consecrated to the sun.

In the procession of the fourth day, the parfleches are carried behind the medicine woman by her attendants. In former years, these were the women who had promised "to go forward to the tongues." They are present at the ceremony in the medicine woman's tipi and may be said to be in attendance during the entire fasting period. At the time indicated in the 796 program, the parfleches are opened and the women in turn step out with 182 some of the dried tongue, face the west, and each holding up a piece, address the sun then nearing the horizon. They declare their innocence of adultery, as at the time of making the vow and cutting the tongues. They also

796 773 778 [539] that the woman was true and that though she went away with the Elk it was merely for the sake of receiving the ritual and that this is evident because in the story it tells how she was able to hook down trees by her magical powers and it is not conceivable that she could do this if she had not been a true woman.

796 778 793 [785] The ceremonial transfer of the sun dance bundle really begins with the fasting of the medicine woman on the first day. Neither she nor her husband are supposed to eat or drink while the sun is visible, and then but sparingly. On the evening before, they are put to bed by the father and mother. The mother places the daughter on the south side of the fire and the father the son on the north side. They must remain in the same position until morning. Before the sun rises the father and mother go to the medicine woman's tipi, stand by the door and sing. They sing as they formally enter, the father raising up the son; the mother, the daughter. The man is taken out by the father and the daughter by the mother for the morning toilet. When they return a small amount of food is fed to the son and daughter, after which the father and mother take a little food and drink. This must be before sunrise. During the day the son and especially the daughter must sit quietly in their places with bowed heads and eyes cast down. [292] [362] She wears a buffalo robe, hair side in, painted red, covering her head as well as her body. Her hair is not braided, but hangs down freely except for a horizontal band around the head. The hair may be allowed to conceal the entire face.

796 The daughter must do nothing for herself. If she wishes to speak it must be in almost a whisper in the ear of the mother or other attendant, who in turn will announce the import, if necessary. A fire is kept burning in the middle of the tipi, the ears are closely drawn around the smoke hole, the door closed, and the tipi cover securely staked down at the edges. [237] Though this keeps the temperature high, the medicine woman cannot use a fan, but may use the skin of a muskrat to wipe the perspiration from her face and hands.

796 785 ● 784 During the fasting period no noise must be made in the tipi. All the attendants must avoid unnecessary conversation and speak in a very subdued tone; utensils must not be rattled or struck together. Visitors may enter, but respectfully and quietly. No noises should be made in the vicinity of the medicine tipi and boisterous acts abstained from in all parts of the camp circle. If water is brought in the vessel must be covered. No one should spit in the tipi nor do the other things forbidden at the ceremony of the tongues.

796 [372] [784] Throughout the whole period there is a male attendant. He keeps the fire alive during the night and until camp is moved. He can only start the fire with an ember from some other tipi, striking fire in the tipi being strictly prohibited.

The Hundred-Willow Sweathouse.

796 As stated before, a sweathouse of special form is constructed on the
343 third day. This is said to have originated with Scar-face, it being the house
into which he was taken by the sun. About the middle of the day a society
[575] is sent out for the willows. These were usually those of the younger men;
the pigeons and mosquitoes. There is a belief, however, that in former
times only warriors could be sent upon this errand. These persons are
[823] mounted and return in procession, singing and circling the medicine woman's
[784] tipi in the direction of the sun, and deposit their willows at the west side
of the camp circle. They must not drink water while on this duty.

[575] An older society is called to build the sweathouse. They must not
[784] drink water while engaged in this operation and receive some of the tongues
after the ceremonies of the fourth day. Formerly, these men must have
[555] had a coup to their credit as a qualification and some informants claim that
the sum total for the society should have totalled at least one hundred,
the number of willows. The work begins some time before sunset by which
time the sweathouse should be completed.

[824] The willows are stuck into the ground in an oval and their tops bent
over and interlocked over the top. The ends point toward the east and the
west, an opening or door being provided at each. The willows are then
painted, one side red and the other black. Next, a hole is dug in the center
of the structure for the heated stones. In the meantime, a small heap of
stones mixed with firewood has been placed some distance to the east.
[237] A buffalo skull is painted with red spots on one side and black on the other.
Sagegrass is thrust into the nose and eye-sockets. Robes are then thrown
over the willows and all is ready for the procession from the medicine
woman's tipi.

796 The procession from the medicine woman's tipi consists of the father
343 and another man experienced in ceremonial affairs, the husband, the mother
and the medicine woman. They approach slowly and by stages, passing
793 around the south side of the sweathouse to the north and then to the east or
[823] entrance. All keep their eyes on the ground. The husband walks with a
[778] heavy staff; the medicine woman carries the natoas bundle with a smudge
stick.

The men enter the sweathouse, while the two women go to the west side
and sit down facing the east. The medicine woman is on the north side with
796 the bundle before her. After the men have entered, the fire is lighted and
some of the attendants (builders of the sweathouse) lift the buffalo skull to
343 the top of the sweathouse where it faces the east. Prayers and the usual

somewhat like that of their leader. One was fully dressed with a blanket 796
around his waist; the other was nude to the waist. The latter was painted 791
chiefly in red with a circle in blue on the back and one on the breast. The 535
former had a pair of horizontal lines on each cheek, those on the right, (302)
black, on the left, red.

It is said that formerly these dancers were nude, except for the breechcloth and moccasins. The entire body was painted. There seemed to have [302] been no fixed painting, but the sun, moon, and stars were usually represented. [532] Around the head, they wore a wreath of juniper and bands of [824] sagegrass around the neck, wrists, and ankles.

The weather dancers are not permitted to eat or drink during the day. [784] Formerly, they remained in the booth continuously until the evening of the fourth day of their dancing; in recent years, they spend the night at home and return to the booth in the morning.

The functions of these dancers are not clearly understood. They seem 796
to be held responsible for the weather: i. e., upon them falls the duty of 789
preventing rain from interfering with the dancing. Whether they do this 821
because they happen to have independent shamanistic powers or whether 791
it is a mere function of their temporary office in the ceremony, cannot be determined. Other medicinemen often attempt to control the weather during the days preceding the formal entry into the booth as well as during the later days. In 1903 (Piegan) there was a contest between a number of rival medicinemen some of whom conjured for rain, others for fair weather; strange to say, clouds would threaten and then pass away during these days, which coincidence was interpreted as proof of evenly matched powers. Several times one of the partisans of fair weather came out near the site of the dancing lodge and danced to the sun, holding up a small pipe and occasionally shouting. He wore no regalia and danced in a different manner from that observed among the weather dancers at the booth. However, the man who led the weather dancers for many years until his death in 1908, was famous for his control over the weather. Once, it is told, he became enraged at the power making the weather bad, shouting out "Now, you go ahead, if you want to. I have great power and can stop you when I will."

In former times, the dreams of the weather dancers while sleeping in 796
the booth were considered of special supernatural significance, since, it 791
is said, they were *en rapport* with the sun. This *rapport* may account (781)
for what seems to be one of their chief functions — blessing the people.
During the days they are in the booth, individuals come to them "to be 791
prayed for." They come up and stand before the booth. The dancer 782
takes black paint and paints their faces. Then he prays to the sun for their 796
[302]

the eagle might pluck out the seizer's eyes with its sharp bill or tear 223
his flesh with its poisonous claws.

It was late when we finished our work on the butte and returned
to camp. In the evening we sat for a time in Black Otter's lodge, and [793]
he sang some sacred songs and prayed Sun to give Fox Eyes success [533]
in eagle-catching. On the following morning Badger Woman gave [782]
us an early feed of broiled meat and tea, and then Fox Eyes burned 824
some sweetgrass close before his couch, bending over the smoke 783
and grasping handfulls of it with which he rubbed himself. Sweetgrass was a sacred plant; its delicious perfume was greatly prized by Sun; the smoke of it removed all human odor.

Having purified himself, Fox Eyes, as was required of him, said 223
to his mother and sister: "I am going this morning to attempt to catch an eagle, and you women must do all that you can to aid me. Until I return you must remain in the lodge, continuously praying
for my success. Also, lest in seizing an eagle he should pierce me [784]
with his claws, you must not put any thorny wood on the fire, nor eat thorny berries, and for the same reason you must not use a needle, or awl, or scratch yourself."

With that we saddled the horses that we had picketed the evening before, on our way taking up a human skull which we had found at
the edge of a grove and which Fox Eyes was to place in the pit. There [826]
was nothing that the Blackfeet dreaded so much as a human skull, but for this very reason it was considered necessary for an eagle catcher to have one in his pit. It was a test of his courage to sit with it during his long times of waiting and watching for an eagle to appear, and there was no possibility of going to sleep and losing his chance to seize one, with such a fearsome object at his side.

When Fox Eyes had settled down in the pit and was comfortable, I carefully replaced the sticks and grass that he had pulled aside in order to enter. Then, saying that I hoped he would have quick success, I mounted my horse and, leading his horse, rode to the top of a butte a half-mile away and sat down in the shade of a pine tree to await the result of our work. The sun was then well up in the blue, and I searched in all directions, but not an eagle was in sight. Not even

721 been stolen. None in the lodge had heard anyone enter or leave it. 778 What enemy could have so quietly taken it? What enemy could have known just where it was in Lame Bull's ravens-painted lodge—so heavily painted with ravens that it was very dark inside at night? Apparently no war party had entered camp, for all of the fast, trained, and valuable buffalo horses that, for better safety, had been tied before the lodges of their owners for the night, were still there, and a hurried inspection of the herds grazing about in the long bottom proved that not a single horse of them was missing.

As I returned to my lodge to wash and dress and eat, the strange quietness of the camp struck me. For once there was no early-morning chatting and singing of the women as they went about their work; even the children, usually so noisy at their play, were quiet. The loss of the sacred bow-case was a terrible blow to all.

Mad Wolf, unkempt, drawn faced, came in to sit with me. Said he: "Bird Chief, who do you think stole my sacred bow-case?"

"Must have been someone of an enemy war party," I answered.

"No. No enemy war party was here, else some of our buffalo horses would be missing. But well you know that I have enemies right here in our camp. Two of them: Short Bow and Fox Head. One or the other of them stole it."

It was true that the two had long been at odds with Mad Wolf. They did not speak to him, nor he to them, when they met. In a fight between some of the Pikunis and a war party of Snakes, Fox Head had claimed, and still claimed, that he killed one of the enemy who had actually fallen to Mad Wolf. And in a night raid upon the Crow camp Short Bow had insisted that he had taken a certain horse that, as others of the party agreed, had actually been led out by Mad Wolf. But for all that I could not believe that either of them had stolen the sacred bow-case.

"It is not reasonable that they would take it for it could do them [784] no good. They could not keep it nor give it to Sun," I said. And my wife put in: "Mad Wolf, dear brother, they would not dare incur Sun's anger by stealing that which you have vowed to give him."

"The crazy-heads care not for Sun. They will do anything to

Man. You shall not, shall not punish her, mutilate her for something 595 that she has not done!" 837

With that, she clasped Otter Woman closer to her and sat glaring 623. at drooped over Talks-with-the-Buffalo and at the row of chiefs; and they were mute, not yet having recovered from their astonishment at her presence here.

Bear Head gave a little cough. Whispered to me: "I am going to tell them what we know of this."

"Yes," I sighed, and he began.

"Talks-with-the-Buffalo; chiefs; and you, oh, Sun's men: *Apikuni*, here at my side, and I were not invited to this talk, but we anyhow came, and for a purpose—for the good of our tribe. You remember [577] what happened to us some summers back, when a certain woman, [784] vowing that she was pure, a faithful wife, took part in building our great offering to Sun, Sun's lodge, and afterward proved to have been a bad woman. Because of her lying vow her man died; our war parties were defeated; many of our hunters crippled, some killed in their endeavors to keep their loved ones supplied with food. Well, it is to prevent another such misfortune that *Apikuni* and I are here. My friends, not Otter Woman, but her accuser, that woman there, is the unfaithful wife, the secret sweetheart of that one we call Handsome Man."

As Bear Head finished, he was rigidly pointing to *Otahki*. And suddenly she drooped; shrank back from the edge of her couch and faltered: "Oh, no. No. You lie."

"Oh, yes, you bad one. And know this: *Apikuni* and I are the two who discovered you and Handsome Man hugging one another there on the trail," he replied.

"You saw them doing that? When? Tell us about it," Talks-with-the-Buffalo demanded.

"Oh, no. No," *Otahki* wailed; and drawing her blanket over her head, sank still lower upon her couch and trembled with fear of what was to come.

Bear Head was not five minutes in telling of our discovery of the two in the timber and of *Otahki's* meeting with her lover in camp on the following day. He finished, and Talks-with-the-Buffalo said

Indians obtained its seeds from them and began planting them, and 171
that finally the Blackfeet got seeds of the sacred plant from the latter 249
tribe.

The Blackfoot Tobacco Planters are a society of Sun priests—so- 575
called medicine men—and the leader of them is the owner of the 778
Water, or Beaver, bundle, consisting of the prime-furred hides of 237
beaver, otter, mink, and other water animals. The ceremonies pre- 249
paratory for planting the seeds are held in his lodge—four days and 776
four nights of prayers and songs to Sun and all of the Above People. 782
Prayers more fervent, inspiring than any offered by the most zealous 533
of Methodist preachers. Songs deeply solemn, soul lifting; truly as 755
classic as the music of Mendelssohn and Beethoven. During this time 822
the sick are welcomed in the lodge, and, after painting their faces
and hands with Sun's sacred color, red ocher, the Planters pray for 302
their recovery and prosperous long life—prayers believed to be ever
efficacious except through some fault of the sick one.

Each member of the Planters society having selected the place 575
for his garden, his women and children burn the brush and weeds 249
upon it, make it ready for planting. On the fourth and last day of the 237
ceremonies a large, buffalo rawhide vessel shaped like a dishpan is 415
brought into the lodge and filled with a mixture of manure and serviceberry soup, and then the tobacco seeds are stirred into it. The vessel is then taken to the gardens—in a large cottonwood grove bordering Bow River—and each Planter drops pinches of its contents into holes in his plot that he has made with a sharp-pointed stick, then fills the holes with loose earth.

During the four days' ceremonies, the sits-beside-him-wife of 575
each Planter has made two images—one of a man, the other of a 778
woman. Each of them has an extra pair of moccasins and a little 782
pouch of pemmican. For the closing rite of the ceremonies, the 249
Planters pray to their images, entreat them to guard carefully their plantings from all depredations, and then place them at the heads of
their gardens. And finally the people are warned not to go to or 575
even near the gardens, lest the images do them grievous harm. Long 778
ago, a crazy young man of the tribe, singing a song of defiance, went 784
to the gardens and stole some of the sacred tobacco leaves, with the 249
[533]

575 result that he soon choked to death. Also, three summers back, a
778 white rancher living near the reservation, disregarding the warnings
784 of the Planters, sneaked into the gardens, had a good look at them,
249 took one of the tobacco plants, and then at the agency bragged of
[533] what he had done. With the result that, upon his homeward way,
his horse threw him and he died of a broken neck.

123 Incidentally, because I have been a member of the Pikuni tribe
575 of the Blackfoot Indian Confederacy for more than fifty years, and
249 because my wife is an active member of the *Mahtokiks*, the womens'
778 secret society of its Blood tribe, we were two summers ago invited
to take part in the ceremonial rites of the Tobacco Planters and visit
their sacred gardens. We were the only white persons ever given that
privilege. It was a vastly interesting experience.

782 But to return to the visit of my friend, *Ahko Pitsu:* We smoked a
123 fourth pipe—four, the sacred number—and then he said to me:
[801] "*Apikuni*, friend, write a letter for me, a letter to my Tobacco Planters friend.'

"Yes. Wait until I put a thin leaf in my writing machine. There. Begin."

Running Rabbit, my very close friend.

I have not forgotten your invitation. I am not well. I have pains in my breast. But daily, nightly I pray Sun to keep me alive, at least to enable me to be with you sacred ones when you have your tobacco-planting ceremonies; for I know that your prayers for me will be favored by the Above Ones, so that I will become well and strong again. Yesterday my son drove me over to a grove on Two Medicine Lodges River. There I sacrificed my otter-fur cap to Sun. I tied it to a tree limb and prayed the powerful one to give me strength to go to you when comes next New-Grass Moon (April).

My wife, my children, my grandchildren are well. We hope that you and your loved ones are also well.

Your friend,
AHKO PITSU

177 Such is the faith of my friend *Ahko Pitsu* and all the other full-
797 blood members of the three Blackfoot tribes. The missionaries of the
various white religious sects have made no least dent in it.

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[175]

ing and travel. Yet each group was able to function within its prescribed limits.

Flexibility was the key to the success of the band system. Each band was flexible in size, structure, and movements. Within the course of a year, a band might join with another band for several months, divide because of intraband controversy, move northward to join the Blackfeet if the buffalo were more plentiful in that region, or winter with the Piegans because of family relationships. Similarly, if a band became too large, it might split into two bands. This happened in the 1870s when the Many Children broke off from the Many Fat Horses band. If disease or warfare should decimate a band, it could easily amalgamate with another and ultimately lose its identity. A good example is the Bear People band, which became involved in a battle with their fellow Blackfeet and, after the leaders were killed, the remainder of the tiny group fled to the Fish Eaters and were absorbed by them.

The variations were numerous. There was even one situation where two members of the Fish Eaters band, Scalp Robe and The Duck, gathered a strong family unit around them. It had all the appearances of a new band and, because the two men walked quickly like pacing horses, the group was known as the Pacer Fish Eaters. Yet neither man wanted to separate from the parent band, so their followers remained with the Fish Eaters—almost a separate band, but not quite.

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[784]
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[115]

The Blood bands, as such, had no taboos or restrictions as did the warrior and religious societies. The practice of marrying within a band was frowned upon, not because of any band taboo, but because the couple was probably related. As one informant (Charlie Pantherbone, 1960 pers. comm.) stated: "Two persons from the same band cannot marry. The leading man was usually the father of all the members, so he did not want his children to marry each other."

On the other hand, if the band member was an orphan adopted from another band, a widow who had remained in her husband's band after his death, a young man who had come to work as a herder, or one of the many nonrelatives to be

778 When the call, "Here comes the medicine
784 pipe," is heard, the people quickly make a place for it to pass through, as misfortune would follow if anyone should pass in front of it. Nor is
[761] anyone permitted to pass between the bundle and the fireplace in the lodge. The ornaments on all
[531] medicine pipes are carefully examined, and retied whenever necessary, for if any piece belonging to the pipe should fall off when the bundle is unwrapped, or during the dancing, such mishap would portend the early death of some member of the family.

778 The entire contents of the Catchers Society
[127] bundle, as listed in the Museum catalogue (No. 12/512), are as follow:

A wooden tripod, on top of which is attached a parflèche bag containing the following: four skin paint-bags tied together, all containing red paint; a cloth and bladder and a skin paint-bag tied together, the bladder bag containing a piece of grease, the other two, red paint; two cloth bags and one skin bag tied together, each containing red paint; three skin bags tied together, each containing red paint; a skin bag containing red paint and two wrist ornaments consisting of thongs, each decorated with a large glass bead; a tie-string of cloth; six leather thongs; a fragment of a weasel-skin bag; four weasel-skin bags,

276 Their owners[A] were called pipe stem bearers,
554 and the position was one of great distinction. The pipe
[756] stem bearer was regarded as a medicine man, had power to
[778] quell frays and disorders that none would gainsay, took
precedence even of the chiefs in treaties and councils, and
their lodges were places of refuge to which the criminal of
[302] every grade could fly and be safe from harm. They were
to be distinguished by a braid of hair in the center of the
forehead, which hung down before the face, and they
painted the face in a peculiar manner by a red cross down
the nose and across the forehead and a red or green spot
[415] on each cheek. The pipe was kept in a skin case painted
[782] red, and was only taken out upon important occasions and
then with great ceremony, the assembled people sitting
[824] quiet, grave and attentive, while the bearer made incense
by dropping dry cedar leaves upon live coals and chanted
in slow time a guttural song accompanied by peculiar
276 movements of the arms. These pipes were all very old, apparently
778 handed down through many generations until the
occasion that had conferred upon them their peculiar virtue
[756] was lost even from tradition. A pipe that accident might
have shown seemingly to possess unusual power could be
dedicated as a sacred pipe by a convocation of medicine
men but it was a privilege rarely exercised. There were
only about half a dozen of them in each band of the Blackfeet
[782] and these were held in great veneration. Indeed, they
might almost be termed the Bible of the Blackfeet and to
swear upon the Sacred pipe was the most binding oath a
[761] Blackfoot could make. Perjury or disregard of the obligations
[784] of such an oath was believed to be followed by instant
[422] death. The ownership of these pipes might be transferred
[437] by barter, but their bearers were seldom willing to
surrender the dignity they conferred. In value they were
[435] computed at about nine horses.

RELIGION

775 The Blackfeet believed in a Great Spirit who is all-powerful
[776] and good and has allotted to them an existence
after death. The future life they think is to be passed
at a point in the Saskatchewan, which they call the Sand

[A] [i.e., owners of the Medicine or Sacred pipe--Analyst]

lodge and to make up the other sacred ob- 53
jects associated with it. When he awoke the [787]
man proceeded to follow these instructions.
Thus each painted lodge is not an entity in [776]
itself but part of a complex of religious ob-
jects belonging to its owner. The owner has [784]
certain rituals to perform and taboos to
recognize so long as he is in possession of
these sacred objects. When he sells his [432]
painted lodge to another an elaborate
transfer ritual must be performed. Painted
lodges have been and still are frequently
transferred from one owner to another with-
in or among the three Blackfeet tribes. Only [422]
the rightful owner is permitted to make use
of the animal figures that belong to his [424]
lodge. No other man would dare copy them.

When a painted lodge cover became old and worn the paintings on it were transferred to a new one. This was generally in

[P·25-A]

ing Woman, told me about the Holy Woman's having been 159
killed by lightning. Goods Stealing Woman had been in the 346
Medicine Lodge at the time, but she, like everyone else except 165
the Holy Woman, had been spared by the lightning bolt. 793

Iron Pipe had arrived in time to claim the Thunder Lodge, 159
but Many Guns, a friend of mine from Gleichen, came to my
teepee and told me that the Thunder Medicine Man had saved 778
for me a medicine drum, some medicine bells, and some other 796
things. In order to receive the medicine articles I had first to go through a ceremony, so at the appointed time I called at the lodge of Iron Pipe. Iron Pipe's wife would not at first allow me to enter the lodge, but Many Guns explained that I was an invited guest and so the woman allowed me to take my place in the lodge.

The ceremony was conducted by the medicine man from 159
Gleichen, the Thunder Medicine Man. I sat on his right, and 778
Iron Pipe sat on his left. The Thunder Medicine Man lighted 796
a smudge of juniper and then handed the smudge stick to 756
Iron Pipe. Then he sang four songs.

The words to the first song were, "When the wind blows, [533]
that is my medicine."

The words to the second song were, "When it rains, that is my medicine."

The words to the third song were, "When it hails, that is my medicine."

The words to the fourth song were, "When the weather becomes clear after a storm, that is my medicine."

When he had finished singing, the Medicine Man took the smudge stick and with it scratched a jagged line in the earthen floor of the lodge from the place where I sat to the door; then he drew a similar line from the place where Iron Pipe was sitting. Then the Medicine Man resumed his seat, and immedi- [789]
ately lightning flashed along the jagged lines from in front of Iron Pipe and me to the open door of the lodge.

This was the most frightening thing I have ever witnessed. I knew that this medicine man had great power, and I asked him whether there was anything in his power that was against me. He said, "No, there is nothing in my power against you.
But you must never again eat roseberries; if you do, your whole [784]
body will break out in a rash the same color as the roseberries."

I said, "What about tomatoes?" [262]

He said, "Tomatoes are all right, but you must never again, under any circumstances, use red paint on your blanket."

159 under any circumstances, use red paint on your blanket." The
778 medicine articles which I purchased from the Thunder Medicine
796 Man included a drum, some medicine bells, and a small
[756] piece of metal.

[432] Later on [in the fall of the year 1901] I went through a
[432] ceremony with Flat Tail and Drags His Robe in order to purchase
a medicine pipe bundle. This bundle contained two
medicine pipes. One pipe came from Sun; the other pipe came
from Thunder.

159 During the Pipe Ceremony I used red paint on my blanket,
and that same night I had a dream in which two men came
796 to my house to visit me. They said that I had been warned not
787 to use red paint, and since I had ignored the warning they
763 were going to punish me by taking away my first child, my little
784 girl. They said that they would be back to let me know when
they were going to take my daughter away from me. The men
[776] did not tell me who they were, but I knew that they were
Thunder and Sun.

159 I went with my friend Many Guns to visit the Bloods over
in Canada [a customary response of the Plains Indian to an
484 emotional crisis was the paying of a visit to a distant relative
154 or close friend; this custom is adhered to by the Blackfoot Indian
763 even today], and while I was in Canada word reached me
that my daughter was very ill. I returned home immediately.

At that time I was still living near the main fork of Cut Bank
159 Creek. When I arrived at my house, my father was holding my
763 little girl in his lap. Earrings, who was an Indian doctor, was
[759] attempting to treat the child, but as soon as I entered my baby
ran to me and clung to me.

That night I dreamed that the same two men came to me and
159 told me that very soon now they would be coming for my child.
763 In the same dream I saw a rider coming. The two men pointed
787 to the rider and said, "We want your daughter, and we want
that rider too." The rider was Mad Wolf. My daughter died
the next day. Mad Wolf died four days later.

The drum that I had received from the Thunder Medicine
159 Man had been the favorite plaything of my little girl. After
778 my child's death I could no longer bear even to look at the
drum, so I threw it into the creek.

The following year I attended a Medicine Lodge above
Browning. The Holy Women was Snake Woman, the wife of
Morning Gun. There had been a flood that spring, and when

122 picked up two stones, but for their texture, not their color (and no doubt Freud's boys could manufacture some significance out of even that small gesture of preference).

I took advantage of the warm day and the empty house to take a bath and put on clean clothing, then for dessert I played a tape of Beethoven's Fifth. Lunch, which followed dessert, consisted of tomato soup and a peanut butter sandwich—accompanied by liberal quantities of resentment that neither Jim nor the Chief showed up. It is now 2:30. I have been trying unsuccessfully to write, and I am tired, but I am going to town.

Later: On the way to town I stopped off to visit with Plenty Treaty B.C. and his wife, Maggie. Maggie, whose Indian name is Sikáki (Black Woman), is a small, roundish lady with cheeks as plump and brown as fresh-baked loaves. She is 78 years old, but certainly doesn't look it. She was sitting cross-legged in the middle of a bed, making moccasins of white buckskin (for the top), parflêche (for the sole), deer sinew (for thread), and beads (for decoration). Her [531] moccasins are works of art. Her beadwork is intricate and always in the traditional pattern (a three-pronged design, representing the three divisions of the Blackfoot Nation—the Piegans, the Bloods and the Blackfoots proper). Maggie does not wear glasses, but apparently [292] she can see perfectly well without them. Louis (Plenty Treaty) said that he needs a pair of bearskin moccasins for ceremonial wear, and he showed me a piece of bearhide that he is keeping for the purpose of making them. Maggie cannot help him out because it is [784] taboo for her to touch bearskin. The situation suggests that probably Louis is a *Kyái-aht-so-mi-tai* (bear dog), of the Crazy Dog Clan (*K'náht-so-mi-tahks*).

[126] Snapped a picture of Louis and Maggie and then took Louis on to town with me. Could not find the boys. Had no mail. I searched for them in the Tribal Office which contains a long hallway with the following rooms designated, front to rear, by prominent signs: Tribal Chairman, F.H.A., Realty, Tribal Secretary, Employment, Housing, Chairman, Court Room, Ladies, Mens.

Dropped Plenty Treaty back at his house and went on back to the ranch. Jim and the old man were there, and I was just in time for a supper of hamburger, fried potatoes and tea. I spiked my tea with bourbon but soon wished I hadn't. After supper Jimmy took the telescope I had given to the Chief and went outside ("In case if I see anything") and almost immediately spotted three mule deer heading down toward the creek about a mile away. So we jumped into the truck and barrelled down the road and across the prairie

785

785 **ASCETICISM**--practices reflecting tendencies of self-abasement or self-torture; mortification of the flesh (e.g., flagellation, hookswinging, bed of spikes); fasting; sexual renunciation (e.g., continence); renunciation of comforts (e.g., vows of poverty, wearing sackcloth); abandonment of worldly affairs (e.g., becoming a beggar or hermit); etc. See also:

Personality	15	Suicide	762
Control of hunger	261	Ascetics	792
Mutilation	304	Idealization of continence and chastity	831

He would say: "There is a good woman. She has built this 867
Medicine Lodge, and is greatly honored and respected by all 861
the people. Once she was a girl just like you; and you, if
you are good and live a pure life, may some day be as great
as she is now. Remember this, and try to live a worthy
life."

At the time of the Medicine Lodge, the boys in the camp [555]
also gathered to see the young men count their *coups*. A
man would get up, holding in one hand a bundle of small
sticks, and, taking one stick from the bundle, he would recount
some brave deed, throwing away a stick as he completed
the narrative of each *coup*, until the sticks were all
gone, when he sat down, and another man stood up to begin
his recital. As the boys saw and heard all this, and saw
how respected those men were who had done the most and
bravest things, they said to themselves, "That man was once
a boy like us, and we, if we have strong hearts, may do as much
as he has done." So even the very small boys used often to 857
steal off from the camp, and follow war parties. Often they 867
went without the knowledge of their parents, and poorly
provided, without food or extra moccasins. They would
get to the enemy's camp, watch the ways of the young men,
and so learn about going to war, how to act when on the war
trail so as to be successful. Also they came to know the
country.

The Blackfeet men often went off by themselves to fast 787
and dream for power. By no means every one did this, and, 785 ●
of those who attempted it, only a few endured to the end, —
that is, fasted the whole four days, — and obtained the help
sought. The attempt was not usually made by young boys
before they had gone on their first war journey. It was
often undertaken by men who were quite mature. Those
who underwent this suffering were obliged to abstain from
food or drink for four days and four nights, resting for two
nights on the right side, and for two nights on the left. It

787 was deemed essential that the place to which a man re-
● 785 sorted for this purpose should be unfrequented, where few
or no persons had walked; and it must also be a place that
[776] tried the nerve, where there was some danger. Such situa-
tions were mountain peaks; or narrow ledges on cut cliffs,
where a careless movement might cause a man to fall to his
death on the rocks below; or islands in lakes, which could
only be reached by means of a raft, and where there was
danger that a person might be seized and carried off by the
Sū'-yē tŭp'-pi, or Under Water People; or places where the
dead had been buried, and where there was much danger
from ghosts. Or a man might lie in a well-worn buffalo trail,
where the animals were frequently passing, and so he might
be trodden on by a travelling band of buffalo; or he might
choose a locality where bears were abundant and dangerous.
[342] Wherever he went, the man built himself a little lodge of
brush, moss, and leaves, to keep off the rain; and, after
making his prayers to the sun and singing his sacred songs,
he crept into the hut and began his fast. He was not al-
lowed to take any covering with him, nor to roof over his
[276] shelter with skins. He always had with him a pipe, and
this lay by him, filled, so that, when the spirit, or dream, came,
[776] it could smoke. They did not appeal to any special class
of helpers, but prayed to all alike. Often by the end of the
fourth day, a secret helper — usually, but by no means always,
in the form of some animal — appeared to the man in a dream,
and talked with him, advising him, marking out his course
through life, and giving him its power. There were some,
however, on whom the power would not work, and a much
greater number who gave up the fast, discouraged, before the
prescribed time had been completed, either not being able
to endure the lack of food and water, or being frightened
by the strangeness or loneliness of their surroundings, or by
something that they thought they saw or heard. It was no
disgrace to fail, nor was the failure necessarily known, for

the seeker after power did not always, nor perhaps often, 787
tell any one what he was going to do. 785

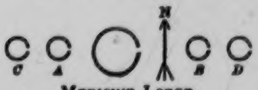
Three modes of burial were practised by the Blackfeet. 764
They buried their dead on platforms placed in trees, on
platforms in lodges, and on the ground in lodges. If a man [761]
dies in a lodge, it is never used again. The people would be afraid of the man's ghost. The lodge is often used to wrap the body in, or perhaps the man may be buried in it.

As soon as a person is dead, be it man, woman, or child, the body is immediately prepared for burial, by the nearest female relations. Until recently, the corpse was wrapped in a number of robes, then in a lodge covering, laced with rawhide ropes, and placed on a platform of lodge poles, arranged on the branches of some convenient tree. Sometimes the outer wrapping — the lodge covering — was omitted. If the deceased was a man, his weapons, and often his medicine, were buried with him. With women a few cooking utensils and implements for tanning robes were placed on the scaffolds. When a man was buried on a platform in a lodge, the platform was usually suspended from the lodge poles.

Sometimes, when a great chief or noted warrior died, his 766
lodge would be moved some little distance from the camp, 768
and set up in a patch of brush. It would be carefully pegged down all around, and stones piled on the edges to make it additionally firm. For still greater security, a rope fastened to the lodge poles, where they come together at the smoke hole, came down, and was securely tied to a peg in the ground in the centre of the lodge, where the fireplace would ordinarily be. Then the beds were made up all around the lodge, and on one of them was placed the corpse, lying as if asleep. The man's weapons, pipe, war clothing, and medicine were placed near him, and the door then closed. No
one ever again entered such a lodge. Outside the lodge, a [775]
number of his horses, often twenty or more, were killed, so

The sufferings undergone by men in the Medicine Lodge 785 ●
each year were sacrifices to the Sun. This torture was an 782
actual penance, like the sitting for years on top of a pillar,
the wearing of a hair shirt, or fasting in Lent. It was under- [776]
gone for no other purpose than that of pleasing God—as a
propitiation or in fulfilment of vows made to him. Just as [304]
the priests of Baal slashed themselves with knives to induce
their god to help them, so, and for the same reason, the
Blackfoot men surged on and tore out the ropes tied to their
skins. It is merely the carrying out of a religious idea that [171]
is as old as history and as widespread as the globe, and is
closely akin to the motive which to-day, in our own centres
of enlightened civilization, prompts acts of self-denial and
penance by many thousands of intelligent cultivated people.
And yet we are horrified at hearing described the tortures of
the Medicine Lodge.

Besides the Sun and Old Man, the Blackfoot religious sys- 776
tem includes a number of minor deities or rather natural
qualities and forces, which are personified and given shape.
These are included in the general terms Above Persons,
Ground Persons, and Under Water Persons. Of the former
class, Thunder is one of the most important, and is wor-
shipped as is elsewhere shown. He brings the rain. He is
represented sometimes as a bird, or, more vaguely, as in one
of the stories, merely as a fearful person. Wind Maker is
an example of an Under Water Person, and it is related that
he has been seen, and his form is described. It is believed
by some that he lives under the water at the head of the
Upper St. Mary's Lake. Those who believe this say that
when he wants the wind to blow, he makes the waves roll,
and that these cause the wind to blow,—another example of
mistaking effect for cause, so common among the Indians.
The Ground Man is another below person. He lives under
the ground, and perhaps typifies the power of the earth,
which is highly respected by all Indians of the west. The 000



Medicine Lodge.

Before the Medicine Lodge is erected, four large sweat lodges are built, all in a line, fronting to the east or toward the rising sun. Two stand in front of the Medicine Lodge, and two behind it. The two nearest the Medicine Lodge are built one day, and the others on the day following. The sticks for the framework of these lodges are cut only by renowned warriors, each warrior cutting one, and, as he brings it in and lays it down, he counts a *coup*, which must be of some especially brave deed. The old men then take the sticks and erect the lodges, placing on top of each a buffalo skull, one half of which is painted red, the other black, to represent day and night, or rather the sun and the moon. When the lodges are finished and the stones heated, the warriors go in to sweat, and with them the medicine pipe men, who offer up prayers. 346 796 [782]

While this is going on, the young men cut the centre post for the Medicine Lodge, and all the other material for its construction. The women then pack out the post and the poles on horses, followed by the men shouting, singing, and shooting.

In the morning of this day the medicine woman begins a fast, which must last four days and four nights, with only one intermission, as will shortly appear. During that time she may not go out of doors, except between sunset and sunrise. During the whole ceremony her face, hands, and clothing are covered with the sacred red paint. 785 ● 796

When all the material has been brought to the spot where the lodge is to be erected, that warrior who, during the previous year, has done the most cutting and stabbing in battle is selected to cut the rawhide to bind it, and while he cuts the strings he counts three *coups*. 346 796

The centre post is now placed on the ground, surrounded by the poles and other smaller posts; and two bands of the [575]

him to bear witness that she has not defiled his body by 796
committing adultery. She then proceeds to cut up the 782
tongues, giving a very small piece to every person, man,
woman, or child. Each one first holds it up to the Sun,
and then prays to the Sun, Na'-pi, and the Ground Man for
long life, concluding by depositing a part of the morsel of
tongue on the ground, saying, "I give you this sacred
tongue to eat." And now, during the four days, outside the
lodge, goes on the counting of the *coups*. Each warrior in
turn recounts his success in war, — his battles or his horse-takings.
With a number of friends to help him, he goes
through a pantomime of all these encounters, showing how
he killed this enemy, took a gun from that one, or cut
horses loose from the lodge of another. When he has [553]
concluded, an old man offers a prayer, and ends by giving
him a new name, saying that he hopes he will live well and
long under it.

Inside the lodge, rawhide ropes are suspended from the 796
centre post, and here the men fulfil the vows that they 304
have made during the previous year. Some have been sick, 785 ●
or in great danger at war, and they then vowed that if they
were permitted to live, or escape, they would swing at the
Medicine Lodge. Slits are cut in the skin of their breast,
ropes passed through and secured by wooden skewers, and
then the men swing and surge until the skin gives way and
tears out. This is very painful, and some fairly shriek with [152]
agony as they do it, but they never give up, for they
believe that if they should fail to fulfil their vow, they would
soon die.

On the fourth day every one has been prayed for, every 796
one has made to the Sun his or her present, which is tied to
the centre post, the sacred tongues have all been consumed,
and the ceremony ends, every one feeling better, assured of
long life and plenty.

Most persons have an entirely erroneous idea of the [182]

627 In the more serious cases of adult disputes, force and physical punishment
were employed if gossip failed. In cases of murder, a revenge killing might take
[682] place if a high payment was not offered in retribution and accepted. A person who
[689] disrupted the summer hunt might be beaten and have his clothing and weapons
destroyed. An adulterous woman might have her nose cut off, or be put to death
[684] by the members of her husband's warrior society (Grinnell 1907:220, Ewers
1958:97–98; Wissler 1911:24–26 discuss specific punishments).

157 These forces contributed to the development of some general personality characteristics of the Blackfeet. Grinnell found them, like other Plains Indians, to be "talkative, merry, and lighthearted," and fond of joking, even though they appeared reserved and quiet when with strangers (Grinnell 1907:181). Wissler commented on their fondness for jest and practical jokes (Wissler 1911:52–53). In addition, I get a picture of a brave, resourceful people, industrious and aggressive, yet much concerned with self, jealous, and easily shamed. These characteristics and their expression were further reinforced by the Blackfeet beliefs.

Religion

869 While learning all these skills and rules, the young people were learning as well the beliefs that gave the practices validity, supported the rights and privileges of age, gave meaning to the Blackfeet world, and added supernatural reinforcement to the moral code.

778 All of the Blackfeet universe was invested with a pervasive supernatural
power that could be met with in the natural environment. A man could seek and
787 avail himself of this power through proper behavior and ritual. He went alone to
a remote place to fast and pray, and to await the dream or vision that would transfer
● [785] power to him. If he was successful the supernatural appeared to him, usually in
animate form, and promised aid and success in all or specific endeavors, if the man
in return would observe faithfully a series of taboos and periodically re-enact in
[778] ritual the experience by which he had received the power. The spirit-being instructed the petitioner to make a medicine bundle containing the symbols of his
[776] power and taught him the appropriate songs and rituals. The spirit was now his
guardian and could be called upon for protection in times of trouble.

The powers, paraphernalia, and rituals became the personal property of the
owner. He and the spirit dealt with each other as individuals, and any group benefits to be expected from this relationship were dependent on the inclinations of the
778 individual owner. The complete power, bundle, songs, and ritual could be sold,
432 or transferred, by one individual to another for a price. The owners of some bundles could sell short-term benefits of their power, as well, usually by going through
the ceremony of the bundle for the benefit of an individual, the family, band, or
tribe, or through the preparation of a charm to be used by the purchaser. Ewers
relates how Wolf Calf acquired horse medicine power and how he used it, how he
transferred parts of the power and how these parts and the bundle itself were
transferred to a series of men from those days in the early nineteenth century on
778 up into the time of Ewer's informants of the 1940s (Ewers 1955:258–261). The
421

Young man undergoing the self-torture at a Blood Indian sun dance.

FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY R. N. WILSON IN 1892

COURTESY AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

[facing p. 174]

[ca. 1850]

796 woman began to collect buffalo bull tongues to be used in the
237 ceremony. When a sufficient number of tongues were supplied—
several parfleches full—the camp announcer called upon all those
who had served as medicine women in previous years and the
women who had vowed to "come forward to the tongues" to come
with their husbands to the lodge of the medicine woman, which
was pitched a little inside the great camp circle. There a medicine
woman of a previous year who was to instruct the neophyte
in the role she was assuming lifted one of the tongues and called
upon the sun, professing her steadfast loyalty to her husband.
Each woman in the assembly then made a similar confession.
Then the sacred tongues were cut up, boiled, and placed in parfleches
in the medicine woman's lodge.

796 Movements in Blackfoot rituals commonly were repeated four
[801] times. In the sun dance the entire camp moved four times on as
many successive days. On the morning of the first day the medicine
woman began to fast. Each day the camp moved she led
796 the way, riding a horse with travois attached, on which were
484 placed the sun dance bundle and the parfleches filled with sacred
[785] tongues. On each of the four days her husband and the male
instructor wise in the ritual of the sun dance purified themselves
[783] in a sweat lodge made from one hundred willows, which were
cut, brought in on horseback, and made into a lodge by members
of one of the men's societies. Finally, on the fourth day, the people
of the tribe arrived at the site selected for the erection of
the great medicine lodge.

796 The major action and the climax of the sun dance occurred on
the fifth day. It was on that day that the medicine lodge was
346 built. Its most sacred architectural feature was the center pole,
a tall tree trunk of cottonwood, forked near the top. A man famed
as a scout for war parties was sent to select the center pole. When
he found a suitable tree he returned to camp and reported his
discovery. Then he led a party of seasoned warriors to the tree.
A man who had killed an enemy chopped the tree down and,
as it began to fall, shot at the trunk with his gun. As soon as the
tree hit the ground all the warriors charged it. Each broke off

to make the fire blaze high were greatly admired for their prowess. 796 The warriors dramatized their accounts by re-enacting their accomplishments—the killing of an enemy, the capture of a 372 weapon or a horse, or the taking of a scalp. 555 They achieved considerable realism in these performances by such acts as firing their guns in the air and riding around the lodge with stick horses between their legs.

However, by far the most dramatic of all the warriors' actions 796 in the medicine lodge were the excruciating self-tortures undergone by young men who had made vows to torture themselves 785 in the sun dance of their tribe. In 1947 the Blood Indian Heavy Head, one of the last of the Blackfeet to submit to this painful ordeal, described his experience to me.

« « « My partner, Buffalo Teeth, and I went to war to take horses. 796 At Medicine Hat we found a small camp of Cree half-bloods. It was moonlight when we sighted their camp. 785 I looked up at the moon and prayed to it, "If I have good luck and get home safely I shall be 782 tortured at the sun dance." Then I stole into the camp and got one bay that was picketed in front of a lodge without any of the enemy waking. Buffalo Teeth got a roan.

When I reached home, I told my story to my father, Water Bull. The old man got up and sang his encouraging song. Then he told me, "My son, you have done something worth doing. You have made a vow that you will be tortured at the sun dance. You must do it this coming sun dance."

A short time after that the bands began to come together for the 796 summer encampment. I filled my pipe and went to Little Bear, a 785 relative of mine who had been through the torture years before. I gave him the pipe and a buckskin horse, and said, "Here is a horse for you. Keep this pipe too. I want you to look after me in the torture." Little Bear went to the next lodge and got two old men, Green Grass Bull and Red Bead, both of whom had been through the torture. They came to Little Bear's lodge, smoked my pipe, and prayed for me.

The day before the torture I ate and drank nothing. Next day I [262] had nothing until after the torture. However, the three old men gave me some sagebrush to chew.

I was the last and the youngest of the three Blood Indians to

796 undergo torture that day. Inside the medicine lodge, on the west
785 side of the center pole and north of the weather dancers' arbor, a
shelter was built of sticks covered with willow leaves. I went in
there before noon of the day of the torture. I was laid on my back
with my head pointed north. I was barefoot and wore only a breech-
796 clout of red trade cloth. There was a little bowl of white paint and
785 another of black paint near by. The three old men painted four black
dots, one below the other, under each of my eyes. This was called
302 "tear paint." If I cried, the tears would run down there. Then they
painted a double row of six black dots on each arm. They painted the
symbol of the moon, points up, on my forehead in black. On the out-
side of each leg they painted a double row of six black dots. The rest
796 of my body and my face were painted white. They took some broad-
785 leafed sagebrush from the ground inside the sweat lodge and bound
it together, placing a wreath of it around my head and bands of it
[824] around each wrist and ankle.

I was taken from the shelter and laid upon a blanket on the ground at the north side of the center pole. Other men were told to keep back away from me. Then an old man named Low Horn was brought forward. He counted four war honors. While Little Bear and Green Grass Bull held my arms, Red Bead took a sharp, iron arrowhead in his hand and asked me, "How do you want me to cut them, thick or thin?" I said, "Thin." (I learned later that the man doing the cutting always did just the opposite of the young man's request. So when I told him "thin," Red Bead knew to make his incisions deep.) Red Bead recited four war honors. Then he pierced my breasts with the sharp arrowhead and inserted a sarvis berry stick through each breast. These sticks were not sharp but flattened at the ends. Blood flowed down my chest and legs over the white paint. Then Red Bead pressed the sticks against my body. They turned me around to face the sun and pierced my back. To the skewers through my back they hung a miniature shield with feathers on it.

Rawhide ropes were brought out from the center pole and tied to the skewers in my breast—right side first, then left side. Red Bead grabbed the ropes and jerked them hard twice. Then he told me, "Now, go to the center pole and pray for your vow to come true." I walked up there. I knew I was supposed to pretend to cry. But oh! I really cried. It hurt so much. Coming back from the center pole, I

[ca. 1850]

was shouting. Then, before I started to dance, I jerked the shield off 796
my back.

I leaned back and began dancing, facing the center pole. It felt 785
just like the pole was pulling me toward it. I danced from the west
toward the doorway of the lodge and back. Then, when the skewers 796
didn't break loose, the old men realized that the incisions had been 785
made too deep. Red Bead cut the outside of the incisions so they
would break loose. As I started dancing again the left side gave way 535
and I continued dancing with only my right side holding. Then an
old man, Strangling Wolf, got up from the crowd and called out four
war honors, then jumped upon me. The second rope gave way and
I fell to the ground.

The three old men cut off the rough pieces of flesh hanging from
my breasts. They told me to take these trimmings and the sagebrush 796
from my wrists, ankles, and head and place them at the base of the 785
center pole as my offering to the sun. This I did. 782

Then I took my robe and walked out of the medicine lodge alone.
I went to a lonely place and fasted for a night. I wanted to dream. 796
But I couldn't sleep at all because of the pain. At sunrise I prayed 785
to the sun.

When I got back to my lodge my mother gave me some food. I had 787
to stay in the lodge for several days. My breasts were so swollen 796
I could hardly move. Indian doctors used herb medicines to take the 785
swelling away and cure my wounds. » » »[11]
[757]

Nevertheless, six decades after this event Heavy Head still bore the scars of his torture.

There is a Blackfoot tradition that the custom of self-torture [177]
was introduced from the Arapahoes through the Gros Ventres.
It was never as common among the Piegans as among the Blood
tribe. Nevertheless, all three Blackfoot tribes made other sac-
rifices of flesh and blood to the sun. Sometimes warriors on their 782
way to meet the enemy cut off bits of their skin and gave them 785
to the sun along with their prayers for success in their dangerous
mission. Women as well as men chopped off one or more fingers
and offered them to the sun. An elderly Piegan woman once
showed me the stump of a finger on one of her hands and ex-

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[11] John C. Ewers, "Self Torture in the Blood Indian Sun Dance," *Journal Washington Academy of Sciences*, Vol. XXXVIII, No. 5, 168–70.

782 plained, "My parents had several children before I was born.
785 All of them died. When I was a baby, my mother cut off this finger and gave it to the sun so that I might live and enjoy long life. That I have done."

796 In the medicine lodge at sun dance time each of the men's
[535] societies danced and presented gifts to the sun. The varied cere-
[782] monies in the medicine lodge usually consumed four or more days. The lodge itself was left standing when the great camp broke up and the several hunting bands went their separate ways for the fall hunt.

756 Like other peoples, the Blackfoot Indians employed simple
[757] home remedies for minor ailments, but when someone was seriously ill they called upon a man or woman who had magic powers
[753] with which to cure the sick. The Blackfeet believed disease was caused by an evil spirit entering a person's body and that it could be cured by a doctor who possessed the power to expell the spirit. As Blackfoot doctors received their detailed instructions for cur-
755 ing the sick in dreams, their methods differed. Many, however, employed singing, drumming, and calling upon their supernatural helper for assistance. Not uncommonly, the doctor appeared to extract some small object from the sick person's body as
756 proof that the cause of illness had been removed. Some doctors
[752] were specialists in treating broken bones, snake bites, or battle
[462] wounds. Many of the most renowned doctors were women. It was customary to pay the doctor one or more horses for his services. The family of a victim of a prolonged illness might give all their possessions to the Indian doctor.

775 The Blackfoot Indians believed that after death the soul traveled to the Sand Hills, a desolate country south of the Saskatchewan River. There the deceased entered upon a new life similar to the one he or she had lived on earth. The dead were invisible to the living. Nevertheless, Indians who traveled through the lonely sand hill country claimed they heard strange noises and saw the trails and deserted camp circles of the dead. The Blackfeet claimed that the ghosts of the dead sometimes returned to communicate with the living in weird, whistling sounds.

dles was "so fixed that one must suspect the present system of trans- 778
ferring bundles to have developed in its present form since the intro-
duction of the horse." Lack of information on the occurrence and 437
transfer of bundles in early times makes it impossible to check Wiss- 231
ler's hypothesis. Native tradition claims the Sun Dance and beaver 174
bundle originated before the introduction of horses. There is also a
tradition that the Blood Indians' Long Time Pipe was transferred
through dog payments before horses were known to these Indians.
It is possible that horses may have replaced slaves, dogs, robes, or
whatever other valuables may have been given to insure the transfer
of sacred objects in pre-horse times. The fact that horses, after their
introduction, were recognized as valuable media of exchange in sec- [436]
ular transactions probably would have encouraged their use as pay-
ments for medicine bundles as well. Whatever the origin of the close
association of horse payments with bundle transfers, it is certain that
it existed in 19th-century buffalo days. The owner of an important
sacred bundle received the petitioner who wished to obtain title to it
with mixed feelings. He weighed his loss of sacred power through
the relinquishment of his bundle against his gain through the acquisi-
tion of a number of fine horses offered in payment.

IN THE SUN DANCE CEREMONY

The influence of the horse made itself apparent at various stages of 796
the Sun Dance, the most important Blackfoot tribal religious cere-
mony. I have described (p. 128) the care given to the transport of 231
the medicine woman's sacred paraphernalia to the Sun Dance encamp-
ment on a horse travois. War honors, most commonly acquired on 796
horse raids, were required of both the cutter of the tree to be used for
the center pole, and by men who cut the thongs to bind the rafters to 231
the posts in the construction of the lodge. The latter rite was trans- 555
ferred through payment of a horse and other property. Before cut- [703]
ting the hide the cutter was required to raise his knife and publicly
declare four personal coups, which commonly included the capture of
enemy horses. In recent years older men who have counted coups
have stood as sponsors for younger men or women who paid to cut
the hide. Plate 17, *a*,A portrays Makes-Cold-Weather (ca. 1866–1950),
one of the last of the Piegan veterans of intertribal horse raids, count-
ing his coups before his protege cut the hide in the Sun Dance near
Browning in 1943.

Men who underwent the excruciating self-torture in the Sun Dance 796
lodge (pl. 17, *b*),A did so in fulfillment of vows, made before going into
dangerous action, to submit to the torture if they came through safely. 785
The two accounts of personal experiences in self-torture, which I ob-

A [See category 796, p. 358-P--Analyst]

796 tained from elderly Blood Indians, indicate that the vows of both men
785 were made shortly before they entered enemy camps to steal horses. There is a possibility that the Blackfoot tribes borrowed the Sun
[177] Dance torture from the Arapaho in the historic period, and hence since the introduction of horses (Ewers, 1948 b, pp. 167–168, 171–172).

796 Three quarters of a century ago Bradley (1923, pp. 267–268) wrote of the warriors who entered the Blackfoot Sun Dance to count their
555 coups during the closing days of the ceremony.

> 231 Those who desire the privilege of recounting their coups must first present a horse to someone at the door of the medicine lodge (an irrevocable gift), when he may enter the lodge and in his turn relate his exploits, illustrating them by gestures indicating the manner of their performance.
>
> The horse stealers, however, are not required to make the gift of a horse at the door but bring with them a bundle of sticks, and casting one into a fire kept burning in the lodge, say: "At such a time I stole so many horses at such a place, from some enemies." Then casting in another stick describe another occasion.

796 If the Blackfoot observed the Sun Dance before they obtained
231 horses, as was uniformly claimed by informants, it was none the less influenced by the presence of the horse in historic times. The data cited above show that even the details of this most sacred tribal ritual were colored by Indian regard for and preoccupation with horses.

BELIEFS CONCERNING THE SUPERNATURAL POWERS OF HORSES

231 There was a general belief among the Blackfoot that horses possessed supernatural powers. Just as they believed some humans pos-
778 sessed stronger supernatural powers than others, so they thought the sacred powers of some horses were more potent than those of ordinary horses. I have referred (p. 259) to the two horses which were credited with having bestowed horse medicine powers upon their owner, Wolf Calf, in his dreams. Horses that performed deeds of unusual strength or endurance, that miraculously escaped from battle without a scratch, or received wounds thought to have been mortal yet recovered, were spoken of by informants as animals possessing potent "secret power." Their remarkable deeds were proof to the Indians of their possession of that power.

Weasel Tail cited a case which will prove this point.

> Heavenly Colt was a strong, gray horse born of a mare stolen from the Flathead by a Blood Indian. He was broken for riding at 3 years of age and proved to be an excellent war horse. After Heavenly Colt gained a wide reputation among the Indians, the Gros Ventres stole him. In the battle between the Piegan and Gros Ventres in the summer of 1866, Heavenly Colt was ridden by Sitting Woman, Gros Ventres head chief. During the action the horse was shot through the neck. Three Suns, a Piegan chief, ran to the horse and said, "It is too bad such a fine horse must die. I shall claim him until he dies." Then the horse dropped. But the next morning the Piegan saw a gray horse on a distant hill.

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a, Makes-Cold-Weather, aged Piegan warrior, counting four horse-raiding coups before cutting the hide in the Sun Dance, 1944. (Courtesy Museum of the Plains Indian.) *b*, A Blood Indian horse raider expiating his vow to undergo self-torture in the Sun Dance lodge, 1892. (Photograph by R. N. Wilson. Courtesy American Museum of Natural History.)

[p. 358-P]

a veritable epidemic of society dances and ceremonials sprang up, 535
attended by all who could pay the price. Those who knew the songs 535
and rituals suddenly stepped into the limelight, even though they 796
may have had but few war deeds to their credit. Here was a new 555
opportunity to be known, to stand out before all others and to
espouse the Indian way of life. Men resolved to join every society
and to own every medicine bundle. Then in a smoking ceremony
where each could display his ritual accomplishments, even the
young who had never seen an enemy camp could compete on equal
grounds with the taunts of the old. In terms of property and sacred
regalia they might even make these old warriors shy before them.

As a result medicine bundles and society regalia were furiously 575
bought and sold. Each new buyer, showing his generosity by paying
more than the previous owner, ridiculed his society enemies for 778
stinginess. Prices for membership in the Horn society soared from [432]
a gun and blanket before treaty to a horse, and from one horse to [435]
several horses. These prices reflect the favourable conditions for
horse-breeding. In five years the number of horses on the reserve 231
doubled, from 540 in 1885 to 1,085 in 1890, according to the agency
estimates. In the years around 1900 there were nearly 3,000 horses, [435]
and it was not unknown to pay sixty horses for a Medicine Pipe.

Officialdom looked askance upon these activities, for this carefree 657
circus took time away from gardening and prolonged unnecessarily
the process of making the Blackfoot self-sufficient. At first 177
the great problems for the agents were in keeping the Indians on
the reserve, preventing horse-stealing, and attempting to interest
them in the care of their houses and gardens. Then the Sun Dance 796
with its misunderstood torture ceremony became an irritation. Some
whites conceived the chief object of the Sun Dance to be the furnishing 785
of a sadistic spectacle to the Indians, who were imagined 177
to smack their lips in delight as the young men tore the skewers 657
from their flesh.[1] As soon as this phase of the ceremony could be
abolished, the Sun Dance would disappear, they believed, for the

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[1] The Sun Dance was an annual ceremony intended to ensure the people against disaster. The central rites, led by a woman, lasted only four days, but many other events also occurred during this season. Since this was the one time of the year when the entire tribe camped together, it was an occasion for joyful renewing of acquaintance, exchanging property, and feasting bosom companions. Among such varied activities, the torture ceremony was a relatively minor event participated in by a few. These were mainly warriors on a raid who, in peril of their lives, had sought the aid of the sun, vowing that, if they returned safely, they would give flesh in return. If they escaped successfully, these men were obliged to fulfil their side of the contract. In the ceremony skewers were driven through the muscles of the chest and back to be torn loose by the participant in a dance.

796 incentive to participation would be absent. Accordingly, Crowfoot
785 was urged to help to abolish the torture ceremony, though death
spared him the embarrassment. In 1890 Indian Agent Magnus Begg
177 took matters into his own hands. He rode up to the Sun Dance lodge
657 at the height of the activities, and, fortified by the sanctions of the Church of England in the person of the Reverend J. Tims, asked the chiefs to stop this part of the ceremony. To the amazement of these two men, the request was complied with immediately.

797 Capitalizing on the Blackfoot's deep-lying interest in the supernatural, the clergy was constantly proselytizing. Unlike their Protestant brethren, the Roman Catholics did not stress the dichotomy of Christianity and Indian beliefs. Rather they permitted these ignorant children of God to follow their own ways, subtly fostering at the same time a greater dependence on the Church and sending their souls onward, purified by the baptismal rites. The unbending Protestant, however, insisted that a man could not worship fetishes and the omnipotent Christian God at the same time; moreover, the Indians were also expected to part with their extra wives before entering the church. Such abnegation required greater conviction than most Indians had. Few Indians could face the tribal rejection that occurred when a wife was sent away for this reason and sacred bundles destroyed. Converts were for the most part unsteadfast, for as soon as crops failed and horses died, thereby proving the impotence of the white religion, they returned to their old forms of supernatural protection.

797 The great tension between the Roman Catholic Church and the
Indians arose over schools rather than doctrinal affairs. In 1884, seven
871 years after treaty, Father Lacombe had completed the construction of St. Joseph Industrial School at High River near Calgary, and was searching the camps for children untouched by Indian "prejudice," whose minds would be receptive to Christianity. A few parents were induced to part with their children, but a few days later, lonely in their tipis, yearning for the departed child, and preyed upon by gossip about heartless whippings, many an anxious parent went to the school to reclaim his child. The first years tried Father Lacombe's patience severely. Not only were his lambs seized from the fold, but they were a wild lot at best. They gulped the proffered food, refused to go to bed at night, "laughed and sang, and with the Indians' power of ridicule made light of the odd furniture."[1] Father Lacombe,

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[1] Hughes, *op. cit.*, p. 289.

796 824 Society rituals was traditionally made from two incense tongs, but recently
[178] two poles crossed at right angles have been used. Eagle feathers and cloth
[237] are attached at the top. The sage is tied at both ends of the arms and at the center, where the poles cross (Fig. 12), balls of sage are also used to cleanse the body during participation in the All Smoking Ceremony.

[782] In the Okan (Holy Lodge) of the Sun Dance the Lodge dancers wore sage around their wrists and ankles---as though they were themselves offerings.

[785] Among the Peigan, one man fasted until the Okan center pole was raised;
[302] then he entered a sweat lodge and used sage to wipe off the black paint with which he had been covered. In early times sage was used as a bed for the Buffalo Stones (Iniskim) during buffalo drive rituals.

[823] It seems that the proper way to dispose of the sage was to throw it eastward rather than burn it or just put it down. There were other uses of
[775] course. A person afraid of a ghost would cleanse himself with sage. A
[773] man who was going to enter a horse race might do the same. There does not appear to be an origin myth for this plant.

SASKATOON

Amelanchier alnifolia Nutt

824 796 The saskatoon (Fig. 13) is a well known bush of the river bottoms and
262 coulee slopes. Its berries make preserves and tasty snacks. They were included in Blackfoot ritual meals. A berry soup accompanied most ceremonial events, such as the transfer of a tipi design or the opening
[462] of a Medicine Pipe bundle or a Beaver bundle. The woman prepared the soup from saskatoon berries, assorted roots, fat, and water. At an appointed
[782] time during the ceremony this soup was served to all participants. The soup was blessed, and an offering of one of the berries was put back into the ground, before eating began. A few mouthfuls were taken; then the

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 29]

Part III

PLANTS USED IN THE TREATMENT OF SICKNESS

Overview

755 The Blackfoot practised two kinds of medicine, one of which was
[757] distinguished by its reliance on divination. The other consisted of common
remedies which were available to all.

[462] There was a general procedure in the divination of disease and there is
[791] [756] evidence to show that there were as many women diviners as men. (Although
it is common practice among anthropologists to denote this kind of ritual
curing as shamanism, we take exception to that in using the term divination,
as we believe that shamanism as practised in the Tibetan sense, does not
apply to the medical treatment of the Plains Indians).

787 In order to obtain power for the purpose of curing an individual would
[785] undertake a vision quest which involved prolonged isolation and fasting.
[776] [778] If the quest was successful, the source of power, usually a spiritual
being in animal form would instruct him in the songs, ritual and construction
[554] of the curing bundle. There are many variations of the titles of men who
have received power, a common one among the Blood Indians is "natoosi -
inaipi" or "sun comes down" another given to us by G.B. Grinell was used
among the south Peigans, "i-so-kin-uh-kin" or "heavy singer for the sick".

756 These bundles remained the personal property of the diviner and could
422 778 not be transferred. Indeed, the source of power was not to be revealed
124 to anyone. We have only been able to obtain an account of this vision quest
from one diviner who has stopped practising. Other informants have given
important information of the patterns of divining disease but have with-held
their own source of power.

[p.62]

785 When my grandma was about a year or two old, Heavy
796 Head became one of the last Bloods to go through the ancient
ritual of self-torture. He had gone to raid horses from an
[782] enemy tribe and gotten into a tough situation. In order to
get help and courage, he made a vow to go through this ritual
at the next Sun Dance ceremony, which is the main tribal
event in our traditional life. In front of all the people, his
chest was pierced in two places so that willow skewers could
be inserted. To these were tied two long ropes, which hung
down from the symbolic Center Pole in the sacred Sun Dance
lodge. Heavy Head had to pull these ropes tight and dance
until the skewers broke through his flesh and released him.
The ceremony may sound cruel today, but my ancestors had
a lot of faith and meaning for it in their nature-oriented life.
A couple of years later the ceremony was forbidden by the
government.

756 Heavy Head suffered from his Sun Dance wounds for some
time. He went out into the hills so that he could cry and
787 suffer alone, and out there he was given certain mystical
powers to cure ailments with prayers, songs, and herbs. As
he grew older he became the keeper of various tribal medicine
756 bundles and a member of ancient societies. Among the Bloods
593 a man does all these things in company with his wife—his main
one, if he should have two or more—so my great-grandma,
First-to-Kill, began to learn the songs and ceremonies of our
sacred ways. Her life changed from helping one husband feed
and house wagon-road travelers to helping another husband
doctor the sick people and lead their religious ceremonies when
they were well.

177 Grandma AnadaAki grew up hearing these old songs and
watching the ceremonies. But her mother knew that the mod-
871 ern ways were coming to stay, so she made sure that her
children got themselves educated. Grandma was sent to a
177 special girls' school run by a British matron named Miss
Wells. Unlike the missionary and boarding schools that were

21: Hungry Wolf F-4,5 (ca. 1972) 1977
NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Blood

Each holy woman had a spiritual mother, a 796
former holy woman, who gave her a sacred 793
Bundle and the knowledge and rights to use it for
the ceremony.[A] Their husbands were instructed by [778]
spiritual fathers, who were in turn the husbands
of former holy women. While the husbands en- [782]
gaged in the sweat baths, the holy women sat
outside the lodge and prayed. The purifying sweat [783]
baths marked the beginning of the holy fast. Dur-
ing this fast, the holy women and their husbands [785] ●
concentrated completely on their efforts to inspire their People. The only thing they consumed was a shell full of water each morning and evening. Only the participants of the Medicine Lodge ceremony were allowed near their tipis, and they spoke not at all or in whispers.

The fourth and final move was made early in 796
the morning. While the camp's lodges were being
set up, the holy leaders marked out the site for 346
the Medicine Lodge in the center of the camp [361]
circle, and dug the holes for the posts. While the
women arranged their households, the children [857]
gathered firewood. The men went down to the river bottom, where they ceremoniously cut one upright post and one rafter log for the frame of the Medicine Lodge, then returned to the camp with the Spirit of a successful victory and again sang the ancient song. Some men fired their guns into the air. The excitement spread around the camp and strengthened the Spirits of everyone.

The construction of the Medicine Lodge began with the placement of twelve upright cottonwood logs. These posts stood in a circle about thirty-five feet in diameter; in the center was the large hole into which would go the Center Pole. The posts, long enough to extend about nine feet above the ground, forked at the top end. Eleven smaller logs, each about twelve feet long, were laid so that their ends rested in the forks of adjacent uprights, thus forming a circle. The remainder of the Holy Lodge was constructed the following day, the most important day of the ceremony.

A, [i.e., the Sun Dance--Analyst]

- [P. 25-A]

they were the first to perform in the Medicine 575
Lodge. This was an opportunity for the societies 561
to inspire the People, as well as themselves, with 796
their ceremonies and comradeship. And it was an [431]
honor for members to donate food to the gath-
ered People, who were given good thoughts [556]
through the gesture.

After the presentation, the People were asked 796
to return to their lodges and spend the night
quietly. There was to be no noise, especially near [784]
the Medicine Lodge. The Weather Dancers were
fasting and meditating on the Holy Powers [791]
created by the sacred encampment. [785]●

THE SELF-TORTURE CEREMONIES

Another group to participate in the Medicine 796
Lodge ceremony came to fulfill their own vows. 782
These were men who had made vows of physical
sacrifice in exchange for spiritual help from Sun. 785
Such vows were usually made during dangerous situations, perhaps on the hunt or warpath, when death seemed imminent. A vowing man might call out to Sun, "Help me, O holy Sun, my Father, and let me see you again with happiness. Give me your strength so that I may survive this danger, and I will give myself to you. I will help my People to remember your Holy Power by performing the physical torture dance during the next Holy Lodge ceremony of our People." Fulfilling such vows was truly a Sun Dance, and inspiring to those who watched.

WILSON'S OBSERVATIONS: 1892

The last time self-torture vows were fulfilled dur- 796
ing a Blood Medicine Lodge ceremony was in 785
1892. The days of warpaths were already past. Al- 657
though our young men still went on regular horse
raids then, there was seldom any fighting, even [178]
when the raiders were caught. Government agents [721]
knew that the self-torture ceremony inspired a
spirit of adventure, which they opposed. Follow- [182]
[177]

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 37A]
[P. 36-B]

21: Hungry Wolf   F-4,5   (ca. 1972) 1977   NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Blood

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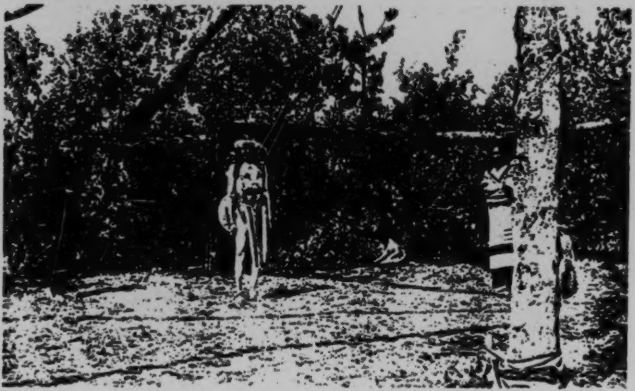
Goes to War suspended from the Center Pole during his self-torture. The man standing near him is his adviser, who underwent this ordeal at some earlier time. (R. N. Wilson)



A vow of self-torture being fulfilled during an earlier Medicine Lodge Ceremony in 1887. A shield is suspended from the dancer's back by thongs. (W. H. Boorne)

21: Hungry Wolf F-4,5 (ca. 1972) 1977
NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Blood

ing the 1892 Okan, the agents sent word to the People that participants in self-torture would henceforth be jailed. They aroused outside backing for their move by calling the ceremonies "heathen rituals." The missionaries hoped that this ban would lead to an end of the Medicine Lodge ceremony itself. However, Medicine Lodges continued to be built. Self-torture vows were carried out in places that were not so public. 796 785● 657 [177] [797]

In writing and with his camera, Wilson recorded the details of the last ceremonies to fulfill self-torture vows: 796 785

Next day nothing occurred until afternoon, when some members of two Societies, "Crazys" [Wilson's own name for the Crazy Dogs, who were not actually crazy in any way] and "Black Soldiers," came out of their rows. At this, Sitting Bull's son entered in the paint garb of the "self-torture" as follows: no clothing except breach cloth and a blanket wrapped about him. A wreath of wild sage about the head, a ring of same about each arm and ankle. Painted with white dirt from head to foot. He sat down upon his blanket and presently some one placed a pillow and quilt on the ground upon which he laid down. A man assisted by others put a skewer in each breast and a 3rd [behind] one shoulder. When he arose to his feet a shield was fastened to the skewer in the back and the ropes from top of centre pole, to the others [on his breasts]. He walked up and embraced the centre pole and silently prayed. Then [he] went back until the ropes tightened and, reaching around behind, grasped the shield, tore it from his flesh with a jerk and cast it upon the ground. Giving a yell, he next caught hold of one of the ropes in each hand and gave them a couple of good jerks which pulled the skin out from his breast several inches each jerk. Then he threw back his full weight upon the ropes, having first inserted a whistle in his mouth, the string of it depending from around the neck. The drums started up and the boy danced in time to their [575] [292] [824] [302] 796 785 304 [782] [534] [535] [533]

[p. 38-A]

beating; he danced in a curve about the north side 796
of the centre pole, blowing the whistle also in 785
time and looking up at the top of the lodge,
throwing more and more of his weight upon the 304
ropes [until] his body was almost at right angles [535]
to the ropes, tied far above him. As his weight
seemed insufficient to break loose the skin [533]
through which the skewers were, a man sitting
near quickly got up, threw his arms around the
young fellow's body, pulled backwards and tore
him loose. He lay upon the ground while one of
the attendants [not a priest or a doctor] cut away
the torn end[s] of skin which were handed to
him. He then arose to his feet and buried the said 796
piece of skin in the loose dirt at foot of sacred 785
pole, took off all the sage ornaments and hung
them upon the offerings of the sacred pole, and
went home. A young man named A-suc [Goes to
War] was also put through the torture and I succeeded
in getting a pretty fair photo of him, an
instantaneous one taken as he was on the jump in
his dance. When these young men are having the
incisions made in their breasts, they often whisper
to the operator stating how they wish the cuts to
be, deep so that there will be difficulty in getting
loose, or shallow cuts that will be easily broken.
Those who do the cutting make it a rule to do the [554]
reverse to what they are requested, thus they reward
the stout-hearted who say "cut deep" and
punish the cowards. The Ats-Knax Society [Itskinaiks, [575]
or Horns] furnished the music for this day. [533]
They sat at the back of the enclosure upon the
South side of the banner; the other, or North
Side of the banner was occupied by the women
who "made the lodge" and others.

Calf Tail and Goes to War were the first two dancers to fulfill their vows to suffer before the People, as just described. They had promised to "give themselves to Sun." Thus, the long rawhide ropes were attached to their breasts so that as the flesh opened, the blood nearest their hearts would flow upon the ropes. From there the Spirit

21: Hungry Wolf F-4,5 (ca. 1972) 1977
NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Blood

Powers took it up to the top of the Center Pole, 796
where the ropes were fastened, and then up to 785●
Sun, who was looking down on the ceremony.

The remainder of that day was taken up with 796
ceremonies that helped the People learn some of
the history of their tribe. Men came forward who 536
had personal exploits, mainly war adventures, to 537
their record, and proceeded to tell their stories, 555
giving a demonstration of the main scenes. Wilson for some reason calls these men dancers.

> *The dancers, one at a time, now related their heroic deeds in a theatrical manner, during which they would go through all sorts of antics in imitations of the original event. Some built little lodges on the ground and alongside were placed two or three little boys, who represented so many picketed horses, and led them away or else made a bold dash and captured them that way. In other cases, the boaster would enlist the services of some of the other dancers and would divide them into two parties, one representing the enemy, the other his own. The squad, acting as the enemy, would stoop low behind an imaginary shelter and watch the others approach the horses to be stolen. When the horse-thieves were almost upon their prey, the others would suddenly jump in sight and fire off their guns in the air, then a sham battle would ensue during the cause of which one or more of the participators would fall as dead, and undergo the operation of scalping, and in some cases have both hands cut off, showing how the killed had been used in the fight long ago. Each man who entered the O-Kon as a member of a dancing party related his deeds of valor during which his relatives brought in goods and presented them to the sacred gathering. The people present took more than a usual interest in certain of these rehearsals which were those of events in tribal history dear to the memory of all. This pride was, of course, more noticeable during the narratives of the older men. A comical feature of these performances appeared in their manner of*

[p. 39-A]

21: Hungry Wolf F-4,5 (ca. 1972) 1977
NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Blood

A man, Sum-a-ke, appeared in
the torture paint and, after sitting on the ground 796
for a few minutes, was punctured as usual and 785●
*fastened to the ropes. I also took his photo but
the Sun was so low that the picture did not turn
out as well as the one the day before.*

The next day of the ceremonies turned out, 796
unexpectedly, to be the last day. Two unrelated 578
incidents caused camp to break: an undisclosed
dispute among the Horns and an unidentified
charge of adultery.

Monday. It was expected that the "Horned [575]
*Ones" would enter today but a dispute arose
among [them], one of their members taking
down his lodge, which formed half of the fraternal
abode, and moving from camp. The night before,* [684]
*a man accused one of the religious women of
the tribe of adultery [this was a separate affair* [793]
*from the Horns dispute]. He claimed he had seen
her at dusk indulging in immoral conduct with a
certain young man, the son of a prominent chief.
This caused a great commotion in camp, which
coupled with the trouble in the Horned Society,
had the effect of breaking up the camp, all dispersing
to the different villages up and down the
river.*

It may be added that the criminal affair mentioned, 793
which was for a long time the one interesting 578
topic of tribal talk, had a somewhat impressive 627
*ending. Sentiment was divided in regard to
the guilt or innocence of the woman, who declared
that her accuser was blasting her character
because she had repelled improper advances of his
own. She had hitherto bourne a good reputation;
in fact she had filled positions in religious rites
that only those who solemnly swore to their virtue
can occupy. The people therefore were loath to
misjudge the woman. The old men said, "Time* [784]
*will tell who speaks the truth; death inside of a
year is the penalty which all women pay who
make false vows; the young man commits an
equally serious crime who accuses a good woman
falsely, therefore the liar in this case must die
before the end of a year. It is not a long time to
wait [and see] which of them will it be." Strange
to relate, the woman died in childbirth in January
following above incident.*

The disagreements that brought the Okan of 796
1892 to an end did not affect most of the People.
They went back home with the Good Spirits that
had presided over the holy ceremonies. Disagree- [578]

(TEXT Continued on PAGE 41-A] [178]

[p. 40-A]

ments among the People were becoming more 796
common by that time, anyway, as their life in [578]
harmony with the Old Ways was being disturbed [178]
by outside interferences, both physical and
spiritual.

SCRAPING WHITE'S AND HEAVY HEAD'S ACCOUNT: 1889

I once asked the Old Man if he had seen the self-torture 796
dancing during the 1892 Okan, among the 852
Bloods. He told me, "I was at that Okan with my
parents, I remember . . . but I was too young to 857
understand what was really going on. Some families [124]
had favorite children (Minipokaiks) who were taken along to holy ceremonies and had things explained to them. I wasn't one of those. Most of the kids were expected to play with their friends and not come near enough to disturb holy places until they were old enough to take part in things. I spent most of my time with my partners, riding across the prairie on my horse and looking
for childhood adventure." Then, sensing that I 796
had hoped for a more exciting answer, he added, 785●
"But my stepfather, Scraping White, later told me about the self-torture dancing. He helped to make the incisions and gave the dancers encouragement. Three summers before that last time of self-torture he had made and fulfilled a vow of his own."

I learned that old Scraping White was one of 115
three men who fulfilled his self-torture vows during
the Okan in 1889. Besides Scraping White, 796
who was then twenty-three years old, there was 785
Tough Bread (also known as Flint and Heavy Forehead) and old Heavy Head, who was then twenty. Heavy Head later became the Old Man's advisor and teacher. In 1947, an anthropologist named John Ewers recorded old Scraping White's
story about his experience. Scraping White was [164]
then eighty-one years old—a fact that disproves the common theory that men who took part in the self-torture did not live long afterward. This theory might have been true in the long-ago days,

[p. 41-A]

when men were sometimes left suspended from 785
the Center Pole for several days and nights, going 796
without food or water. Scraping White was only 115
suspended for a short time, and was not required 164
to fast at all. Here is his story.

Three of us tortured ourselves in the Sun 785
Dance that year—Tough Bread, Heavy Head, and 796
I. I was the oldest of the three.

I was on a war party to take horses from the [782]
Assiniboine [a neighboring tribe] *when I made*
my vow to be tortured. Shortly before Sun went [726]
down, when we were in sight of the enemy camp, I turned to Sun and said, "I want good luck. Now I go to the enemy. I want to capture a good horse and go home safely. I'll be tortured this coming Sun Dance." As soon as it was dark I went into the enemy camp and took two fast horses out of their corral without any of them knowing it. I had good luck and reached home safely.

Then I told my relatives of the vow I had made. Yellow Horn, an older relative, who had been through the torture before, told me, "Put up a sweat lodge for me and I shall look after you." I made the sweat lodge the very next day.

Not long after that the Sun Dance was held. The torture took place the day after the Center
Pole was raised for the Medicine Lodge. I was the [304]
first one to be tortured. The torture began about
noon. Old Yellow Horn cut my breasts with an [411]
iron arrowhead and inserted a skewer through the
cuts at each breast. These skewers were of service- [412]
berry wood, flattened on both sides, thinned toward the ends but not sharpened, and about this long (showing two inches with his fingers). *Then sinew was wrapped around the ends of the skewers and they were tied, each skewer to a 4-strand plaited rawhide rope. The two ropes were fastened at their far ends to the Center Pole at its forks.*

I stood up and Yellow Horn told me, "Now [782]
you walk up, put your arms around the Center Pole and pray. Tell Sun, now your vow is being fulfilled." I did just as he told me. Then I stepped

back. Yellow Horn pulled hard on the rawhide 785
ropes attached to the skewers. Then I danced. I 796
*didn't dance long before my flesh gave way and
the skewers pulled out. Yellow Horn came to me
and cut the skin that had broken. He trimmed it
off even. Then he gave me the pieces of skin he
had cut away and told me to take them and stick
them in the ground at the base of the Center
Pole, saying, "Now, Sun, I have completed my
vow."*

The Old Man said that he often saw on his
father's chest the scars where he had been
pierced, but that old Scraping White suffered no
other permanent injuries from the experience. He
said that his father had asked for deep cuts and
had been fortunate in actually having the mildest
torture of the three. He remembers his Old [115]
People telling that Heavy Head suffered more
than anyone they had ever seen. Here is how
Heavy Head told his story to the same anthropologist:

There were only two of us, Buffalo Teeth, 796
my partner, and I. We went to war together to 785
take horses. At Medicine Hat we found a small 782
*camp of Cree half-breeds. It was night when we
saw their camp. It was moonlight. I looked up at* [726]
*Moon and prayed, "I shall be tortured at the Sun
Dance if I have good luck and get home safely."
Then I stole up to the camp and got one bay that
was tied in front of a lodge without any of the
enemy waking or seeing me. Buffalo Teeth took a
roan. We started back to the Blood camp, traveled* [261]
*three days and three nights with no food
other than a black rabbit. We got awfully weak
and hungry.*

When I reached home I told my story to my 796
father, Water Bull. The old man got up and sang 785
*his honoring song. Then he told me, "My son,
you have done something worth doing. You have* [554]
*made a vow that you will be tortured at the Sun
Dance. You must do it this coming Sun Dance."*

21: Hungry Wolf F-4,5 (ca. 1972) 1977
NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Blood

A few days later, I went out to the east point 796
of Belly Butte to fast. While I fasted I dreamed 785
that a sacred person came to me and gave me a
drum and certain herbs to use for doctoring. [787]
Then I returned home.

A short time after that the bands began to
come together for the Sun Dance Encampment. I
prepared myself to go to an old man named Little
Bear, a relative of mine [SikskiAki's great-grandfather],
who had been through the torture himself,
years before. I filled my pipe and took it to [431]
him. I gave him the pipe and a buckskin horse,
and said, "Here is a horse for you. Keep this pipe
too. I want you to look after me in the torture."
When I gave him the pipe he put it down and
went over to the next lodge. There were two old
men there, Green Grass Bull and Red Bead.
These men were not related to me, but they were
both older than Little Bear, and both had been
through the torture. Little Bear asked them to [792]
come to his lodge, to take my pipe and pray for
me. After they prayed, they told me not to take
any food or water the day I was to be tortured.

The day before the torture I ate or drank [261]
nothing. Next day I ate or drank nothing until
after the torture. However, the three old men
gave me some sagebrush to chew.

I was the last of the three Bloods to undergo
the torture that day. Scraping White, who was
the oldest, was first. Then Tough Bread, then I. I
was the youngest. Inside the Medicine Lodge, on [346]
the west side of the Center Pole and north of the
Weather Dancer's arbor, a shelter was built of
sticks like a sweat lodge, covered with willow
leaves. I went there before noon of the day of the
torture. I was laid on my back with my head
pointed north. I was barefoot, and wore only a [292]
breechcloth made from a small red trade shawl
purchased from the Hudson's Bay Company.
There was a little bowl of white paint and another [302]
of black paint nearby. The three old men
painted four black dots, one below the other,
under each of my eyes. This was called "tear

[p.42-B]

21: Hungry Wolf F-4,5 (ca. 1972) 1977
NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Blood

paint." If I cried the tears would run down there. 796
Then they painted a double row of six black dots. 785 ●
The rest of my body was painted white, also my [302]
face. They took some of the broad-leafed sage-
brush from the ground inside the sweat lodge and [292]
bound it together, placed a wreath of it around [824]
my head, and bands of it around each wrist and
ankle.

I was taken from the sweat lodge and laid
upon a blanket on the ground at the north side of
the Center Pole with my head to the north, my
feet toward the Center Pole. Other people were
told to keep back away from me. Then an old
man named Low Horn was brought forward. He
counted four of his coups. The three old men,
Little Bear, Red Bead, and Green Grass Bull,
held me—one at each arm, and one at my head.
Red Bead took a sharp iron arrowhead in his [304]
hand, and asked me, "How do you want me to [411]
cut them? Thick or thin?" I said, "Thin." I
learned later that this question was always asked [412]
of the man undergoing the torture before his
breasts were pierced, and the one doing the cut-
ting always did just the opposite of the young
man's request. So when I said "thin," Red Bead
knew to make his incisions deep. Red Bead gave
four of his own war coups. He made no prayer.
Then he pierced my breasts with the sharp arrow- [824]
head and inserted a serviceberry stick through
each breast. The sticks were not sharp but flat-
tened at the ends. The other two men held my
arms as he cut and inserted the sticks. Blood
flowed down my chest and legs over the white
paint. Then Red Bead pressed the sticks against
my body with his hands. They turned me around
to face Sun and pierced my back. To the skewers [714]
on my back they hung an imitation shield, not so
heavy as a war shield. The shield had feathers on
it, but I don't remember how it was painted. It
belonged to a man named Peninsula.

The ropes were brought out from the Center Pole and tied to the skewers in my breasts—right side first, then left side. Red Bead then grabbed

the ropes and jerked them hard twice. Then he 785
told me, "Now you go to the Center Pole and 796
pray that your vow will come true." I walked up
there. I knew I was supposed to pretend to cry. [152]
But oh! I really cried. It hurt so much. Coming back from the Center Pole I was shouting. Then, before I started to dance, I jerked the shield off my back.

I leaned back and began dancing, facing the Center Pole. It felt just like the Center Pole was pulling me toward it. I began to dance from the

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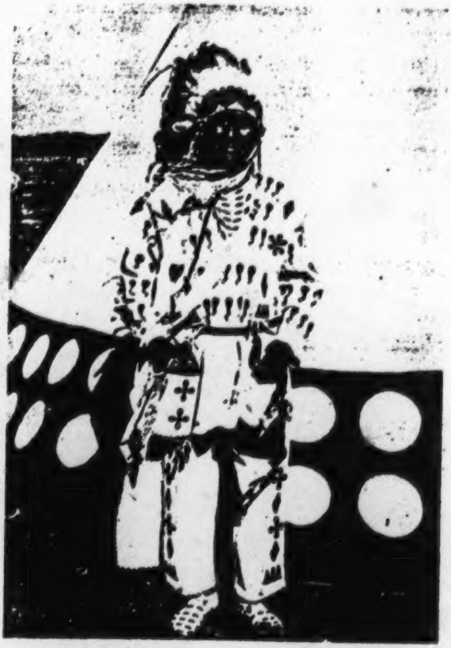

Heavy Head, around 1940, carrying his Crazy Dogs Society Rattle, and wearing one of the last weasel-tail shirts to have been made and transferred among the Bloods.

21: Hungry Wolf F-4,5 (ca. 1972) 1977
NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Blood

west toward the doorway of the Sun Lodge and 785 ●
back. Then, when the skewers did not break 796
loose, the old men realized that the incisions had been made too deep. Red Bead came up and cut the outside of the incisions again so they would break loose. As I started dancing again the left side gave way and I had to continue dancing with only my right side holding. An old man named Strangling Wolf jumped up from the crowd and came toward me shouting. He called out four coups he had counted and jumped on me. The last rope gave way and I fell to the ground.

The three old men came to me and cut off the rough pieces of flesh hanging from my breasts. They told me to take this flesh that had been trimmed off, and the sagebrush from my head, wrists, and ankles, and place them at the base of the Center Pole. I did as they told me.

Then I took my robe and walked out of the Medicine Lodge alone. I went to a lonely place and fasted for a night. I wanted to dream. But I couldn't sleep because of the pain. At sunrise I [782]
prayed to Sun.

Some time after that I saw a man approaching on horseback. He said, "I'm going to take you home right away." He took me up behind him on his horse and rode me slowly back to camp. My breasts were swollen and hurt. The rider's name was Red Crane. He told me of a mix-up that took place at the Sun Dance over horses stolen from the Gros Ventres.

When I got to my lodge, my mother gave me something to eat. She and my father told me what had happened at the Sun Dance gathering—a mix-up between the Mounted Police and Indians. I had to stay in the lodge several days.
My breasts were so swollen that I could hardly [752]
move. Indian doctors used herb medicines to take [759]
away the swelling and to cure my wounds.

Heavy Head and Scraping White both passed away a few years after their stories were recorded. They were the last of our People who

[p.44-A]

had undergone the self-torture ceremony. With 785
some variations in the details, their stories are still 796
told whenever our Old People get together to talk
about the past. The mentioned mix-up with the
Mounted Police will be more fully described later
in a story about old Calf Robe, who was the object
of the mix-up.

THE 1908 OKAN, SPONSORED BY HEAVY SHIELD

We are fortunate to have Wilson's written account 796
of the 1892 Okan. Without it, many of the 114
details of the ceremony would have been lost to
us. Nevertheless, many details were not recorded
and are lost because he did not understand all
that went on around him. He was given no
Teachings about Medicine Lodge ceremonies.
Among the Old People who were given such 796
Teachings is George First Rider, the son of a 115
priest and doctor. Here is his story of another,
later Sun Dance, as he told it recently.

My grandmother, Catching Amongst, was 796
going to sponsor a Holy Lodge in the year 1908,
but she didn't. Something happened in the family
of the people that were going to transfer the
Natoas Bundle to her. [Probably a death; a mourning [765]
family cannot take part in holy ceremonies.]

If there is no one to sponsor a Holy Lodge, 796
then the Horns Society will look for someone. 575

The Horns Society took one of the tongues [237]
[from the cows that were butchered on ration [531]
day], and the ceremonial leader painted it black.
The Horns Society sang, "The black paint I take.
. . . It is holy."

The seven high-ranking members went out in
a procession bearing the painted tongue. They [292]
all wore holy moccasins, breechcloths, and robes.
The procession led to the east entrance of the
camp circle. They walked slowly. When they got [782]
to the south side, they stopped and prayed. They
stopped and prayed several times as they pro-

the relative was an experienced doctor, this might 756
inspire the young person to dream of specific uses 759
for the plants. The dream would usually include 787
songs and ceremonies necessary to call on the Power of the plants. Most doctors had a good knowledge of plants and herbs, but their special Powers in curing were with the things they had dreamed about. The older the doctor, the more specialized dreams he was likely to have. Many old doctors had quite a lot of Power in this Way.

During the 1930s, when many of our People 756
still followed the Old Ways, there were several 127
well-known doctors administering to their ailments. In 1939, a woman named Esther Goldfrank came to us from New York to study personal relations among the Bloods. In her records, she included some information about Blood doctors. Among these doctors was Knife, uncle of Sorrel Horse, who gave this information to Goldfrank.

Knife first got his Power to doctor when he 756
went to a bear's den to seek a vision. The den was 787
located near Hill Spring, not far from the town of Cardston. Although it was an abandoned den, Knife heard bear sounds his first two nights there. The third night, the bear's Spirit came to him
and taught him how to heal. He was told to take [237]
a bear's claw, tie certain shells to it, and wear it as
a necklace. In addition, he was instructed to always [301]
grab his patients and treat them as though they were bears. Knife later gave the necklace to his son, Two Guns, who had dreams of his own
with it. Two Guns dreamed that he should wear a [301]
certain kind of stone on a necklace slung over one shoulder, so that he would be able to doctor hemorrhages. He was best known for this last
specialty. Sometimes his grateful patients paid [465]
two or three horses for his doctoring.

The white woman's notes also mention Heavy Head, who was a doctor as well as a holy
man. He received his first Powers to doctor while [785]
fasting in the Belly Buttes prior to his self-torture at the Sun Dance of 1889. After Gets Wood at

21: Hungry Wolf   F-4,5   (ca. 1972) 1977   NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Blood

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[796] [785] Sitting Bull—the Blood—with his two wives and his children. The boy at the left later became one of the last four men to fulfill self-torture vows, during the 1892 Medicine Lodge ceremony. This scene was taken around 1880, and must have been of a hunting camp, due to the unusual crudeness of the tipi poles and cover. Among his sons were Calling High and Jim Wells.

439 A group of visiting Assiniboine men wearing Grass Dance regalia, which they traded for Blood horses in 1893. Blood spectators are watching the dance in the background. Assiniboine singers are seated around the drum in the foreground. (R. N. Wilson)

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21: Hungry Wolf F-4,5 (ca. 1972) 1977
NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Blood

we finally crossed and approached the remaining 726
horses, one of their owners came forward. I was 159
just about to shoot him when he announced that
he was a Blood. He informed me that he was one [628]
of a party of Bloods and Piegans who had taken the big herd of horses from the Crows and that he was now looking for more than half of them, which had lately disappeared. I explained that some of the Blackfeet of my party had relieved him of his horses and were now on their road north with them.

Our party now split up, five went back to the 159
Crow camp we had just left. Some went home 727
with the Bloods and Piegans who had taken the
horses. I sent back my four horses with a young [431]
man to whom I gave one for his trouble of delivering them; one horse I sent to my uncle, one to a female relative, and the other I sent to the woman who had supplied me with moccasins when I left home on this trip. I also sent to my relatives a message that when I had captured many horses I would return home, and not before, even should it take me until the next summer to do so.

Five of us started out on a new expedition 159
and were soon joined by 12 more. For many days 721
and nights I slept and fasted by myself, seeking an
indication as to what to do. Finally, one night I [787]
dreamed that at a certain mountain were a great [785]
number of horses. At once we went there and found the dream to be true, for in the neighborhood was a large village of Snake Indians [Shoshones], their horses grazing in every direction around the camp. The first night I captured 6 and sent them home by two young fellows. The next night with some others, I returned with a large
herd, as many as I could drive. Upon my reaching [431]
our camp I said to Eagle Ribs, my friend and a chief afterwards [the uncle of Mokakin], "Take your choice of all these horses, my friend, for you are a married man and I am single." After he had done so I picked out two and told the others to help themselves, to divide them amongst them.

[p. 241-B]

through the edge of his shirt; neither had gotten 721
hurt. 608

Now this is strange: one's name was Striped [553]
Wolf and the other's Striped Bird—just about
the same name. They exchanged names. They
shook hands and kissed, and became like brothers.
All the Gros Ventre's relatives gave Striped Wolf [431]
a lot of presents—money, blankets, and other
things. They remained good friends until they
died.

THE HANGING OF CHARCOAL

Charcoal's days ended in 1897 at the age of thirty- 682
nine, on the gallows at Fort MacLeod. Before his [551]
death, Tsako, as our People nicknamed him, became
the most wanted man on Canada's western
frontier.

Wilson wrote of Charcoal as a participant in 778
a Nighttime Ceremony and recorded that he had 425
owned a number of Medicines for which he sang
songs: painted lodge and flag; painted lodge; Sioux
sword for the Grass Dance; Horns Society; Mountain-Trim
Tipi; Soldier's Society Pipe; Weasel-tail
buckskin suits; Dogs Society; and bear knife. This [411]
last sacred article was a huge dagger with a handle
made from a bear's jawbone. It was sought after [237]
and owned only by Powerful warriors. During the [796]
transfer ceremony for this knife, the new Owner
was forced to strip and roll on a bed of thorns. At [785]●
the end of the transfer the former Owner would
hurl the sacred knife at the new Owner, who
could have it if he survived and caught it.

Charcoal had two wives. One was faithful to 682
him, but the other, Pretty Wolverine Woman, was 837
fickle and wild. Although she had been married to
Charcoal for about five years, everyone in camp [595]
knew that she and a young man named Medicine
Pipe Stem were lovers. They had been seen together
while she went out after water. Charcoal's
relative, Eagle Bear, had talked to her several
times and warned her that her husband could
punish her for her actions. Charcoal was known [411]

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 280-B]

excitement and shooting that some of our horses 000
stampeded out of the camp. I became a member 796
of the Crazy Dogs Society at that time. I stayed 177
with my relatives at my uncle's lodge until the 657
Medicine Lodge ceremony, when we had a lot
of trouble with the Mounties. The Mounties [575]
wanted to arrest Calf Robe again, because he had threatened them with a gun the first time they arrested him. Calf Robe decided to make up for not fighting in the battle with us, so he fought the Mounties in the Medicine Lodge, and the Mounties got beat up pretty bad. And that is the end of my story.

THE FIGHT IN THE MEDICINE LODGE IN 1889

The incident in which the Mounties tried to arrest Calf Robe inside the Medicine Lodge is talked about by our Old People as "the time we had a war with the Red Coats." Some of our People thought that the Mounties came to stop our men from performing the self-torture ceremony.

Two men underwent that ceremony in 1889, Heavy Head and Tough Bread. However, the Mounties did not arrive until the day after this took place.

Here is how Grandma AnadaAki remembers 796
her stepfather Heavy Head's story of his self- 785
torture and what followed:

My father said that he went through the [292]
torture barefooted and without any clothes except a breechcloth. They cut him in the tipi where the holy woman stays. He said that other men were usually cut in the Medicine Lodge. He said that somebody told him to ask for deep cuts, so that
they would not cut very deep. They painted him [302]
all over with sacred white clay, and designs were [778]
painted on his face with red paint and black
paint. They tied sage around his wrists and his [824]

21: Hungry Wolf F-4,5 (ca. 1972) 1977
NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Blood

ankles. When they cut him, he said that he felt like his heart was being cut out of his body. His body was all bloody by the time they got him fixed up. They even cut his back and tied a shield to it. 796 785 [824]

From the holy woman's tipi he was made to dance to the Medicine Lodge. The wind blew on his wounds and caused him so much pain that he cried all the way there. When he got inside he hugged the Center Pole and prayed, then he leaned back on the ropes that somebody tied from the top of the Pole to his chest. He leaned back real hard and jumped up and down and sideways while the drummers sang a song. He said that he jumped real hard because the pain was so bad that he wanted to tear the ropes off fast, but they didn't tear out. Black Eagle took a stick and hit the rope hard and the skin broke on that side. But my dad stopped him from hitting the other side because of the pain. Big Wolf grabbed him by his hair and pulled him back so hard that the other side broke. Black Eagle was counting some coups so that he could cut the loose skin off my dad's body. He cut the skin off and he put gunpowder on the wounds. After that my dad was sent away to sleep and look for a vision. That was when they had the riot inside the Medicine Lodge. [535] [152] [782] [533] [555] [752]

My father said that he walked westward from the camp until he came to the Belly River where he slept on top of a cutbank. He could hardly sleep that night from all the pain of his wounds. The next day he was walking around by the river when his relatives found him. They warned him not to walk back into the middle of the trouble at the Medicine Lodge. By the time they all got back home together the trouble was over and the People were packing up their camps to go home. The men were angry and had their guns all ready in case the Mounties came back to fight again. Some of the Mounties had gone into the Medicine Lodge to arrest old Calf Robe while the men were just in there telling war stories. Those 796 657 177

[p. 300-B]

PROGRAM BY DAYS.

796 *First Day.* The program opens with moving camp to a site previously
[785] selected. On the morning of this day, the medicine woman begins to fast,
which may be taken as the real beginning of the ceremony. If the ceremony
[782] of "cutting the tongues" has not been previously performed or completed,
[533] it is now in order. In any event, the father and any male assistants he may
choose to invite, spend a part of the day in "praying and singing over the
[343] tongues." A society brings in willows and a hundred-willow sweathouse is
built.

Second Day. In the morning, the camp moves again to a site still
[824] nearer that proposed for the sun dance. A few green boughs of cottonwood
[343] are kept around the base of the medicine woman's tipi as a sign of its sanctity.
[782] A sweathouse is made, as on the previous day. "Praying and singing over
[533] the tongues" continues during the day and evening.

Third Day. The same as the second day.

Fourth Day. The camp moves again; this time to the site of the sun
[343] dance. In the afternoon, the fourth and last hundred-willow sweathouse
[533] is built and used. The singing continues during the evening in the medicine
woman's tipi.

Fifth Day. This is an active day.[1] The various bands cut and drag in
the poles and green cottonwood boughs to be used in constructing the
dancing lodge. The center, or sun pole, is selected and brought in with the
ceremonies pertaining thereto. During the day, the holes for the posts are
dug and the sides of the dancing lodge put in place and prepared for the
raising at sunset. A wind-break is erected at the west side, facing the forked
[756] end of the sun pole. Later in the day, some medicinemen take up their
[782] stations here to receive offerings to the sun and place them on the pole. In
the forenoon, the ceremony connected with the opening of the natoas
bundle begins in the medicine woman's tipi. This is completed by the middle
of the afternoon when there is a procession from the tipi to the wind-break
[431] facing the sun pole. The thongs for the poles are cut. While these are
[735] taking place, some food is distributed among the poor people. Those
[782] women, who, during the past season, promised "to come forward to the
tongues" now fulfil their vows by public declarations addressed to the
setting sun. The pole raisers then approach from the four quarters, erecting

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[1] As in many other cases, there is a difference of opinion as to what was, or is, the correct schedule. Some maintain that the timber and sun pole are brought in on the fourth day and the fifth day given over to the erection of the dancing lodge only. This is, however, a matter of no great moment.

first the sun pole and then the rafters, with as much speed as possible. The 782 medicine woman then returns to her tipi and the father with his male companions goes into a sweathouse.

Sixth Day. In the morning, a booth is erected in the dancing lodge for the medicinemen, or weather dancers. Later in the day, they approach, with processions made up of their respective bands, and take their places in the booth. At various times during the day, they dance to the sun. People also come up to be painted and prayed for. As a rule, the medicine-pipes are brought out for these men to bless and smoke. During the after- [535] noon, the "digging dance" occurs, when the fireplace is made and the fire [354] kindled.

Seventh Day. People still come to be painted or prayed for by the medicinemen. Later in the day, the dancing of the societies begins. [535]

Eighth Day. The dancing may continue on this day; otherwise, camp [535] is broken and the bands go their several ways. The dancing may continue several days, there being no definite time for closing the ceremony. Indeed, to the Blackfoot mind, the really vital part of the ceremony closes on the evening of the fifth day. The dancing of the societies is free to take its course as the various organizations see fit. In former times, however, it was customary to break camp any time between the seventh and tenth days.

According to our information, the four camps of the medicine woman 796 was the rule in olden times and a hundred-willow sweathouse was made at 178 each camp. In recent times, but two moves seem to have been made; the first day marking the move from the regular home camp to the temporary one where the second day is also spent. But one of the hundred-willow sweathouses is now made — the one on the third day. Also, where formerly [343] they used the ordinary type of sweathouse, at the close of the fourth day, the men now return to the hundred-willow sweathouse. The time then was "when the service berries are ripe", perhaps August, instead of Fourth-of-July week, as in recent years.[1] Even the fast is much abbreviated, usually [785] but of two days' duration.

THE VOW.

The most important functionary in the Blackfoot sun dance is a woman, 796 known among the whites as the medicine woman, and upon a clear compre- 793 hension of her functions and antecedents depends our understanding of the ceremony itself. Accordingly, we shall proceed with as complete an exposi-

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[1] See Grinnell, George Bird, *Blackfoot Lodge Tales* (New York, 1903). 264, for program. [113]

796 [782] pray for themselves and their relatives after which they distribute dried tongue among them. Finally, there is a general distribution of tongues among the people.

796 837 783 However, there is another aspect of their appearance at this point. The Blackfoot assume that many women have at one or more periods of their lives been invited by a man to commit the offence and that often the occasion is one of great temptation or calls for great presence of mind and will-power. Now, when addressing the sun, if so approached, the woman narrates the circumstances, naming the men committing the offence, and recounts the manner of her refusal. In naming the offender, they usually say, "I suppose he hears what I say." These women are also subject to challenge of their having committed adultery. It will be seen from this that the part they take in the ceremony is an ordeal for which most women have little liking and one which they will not undertake lightly. The Blackfoot, themselves, regard it as one of the most solemn occasions in the ceremony. So far as we could learn, no one now living was ever present when one of these women was challenged, but the naming of men who were guilty of improper advances was not unusual.

796 793 A retrospect of the concept of the tongues indicates that the entire ceremony, or their association with the medicine woman and those who are sexually pure, gives them a potency that may be acquired by eating. They seem most closely associated with sexual purity since they are less primary in the function of the medicine woman than in case of those who "go forward," the former being required to possess many virtues, the latter [785] but one. While the medicine woman fasts and keeps to her tipi, the others do not.

THE MEDICINE WOMAN.

We shall now give our attention to the medicine woman. As previously stated, she is in most respects the central figure in the whole ceremony, around whom centers its more serious and solemn aspects. On the fifth day, an elaborate ritual is demonstrated in her tipi, culminating in the [778] procession to the dancing lodge. To this ritual belongs a medicine bundle with accessories, known as the natoas, though the name is primarily that of the headdress which the bundle contains. [432] This bundle is transferred in the ritualistic way to the medicine woman by the ceremony and thus becomes hers to care for and guard until used again at another sun dance ceremony. The ritual and the bundle have been discussed in detail in Volume 7 of this [292] [301] series. In addition to the contents of the bundle, there must be a special robe of elkskin, a dress of the same material, and wristlets of strong elk teeth.

23: Wissler E-4,5 (1902-ca.1911) 1918
NF6 Blackfoot NF6

796 773 778 [539] that the woman was true and that though she went away with the Elk it was merely for the sake of receiving the ritual and that this is evident because in the story it tells how she was able to hook down trees by her magical powers and it is not conceivable that she could do this if she had not been a true woman.

796 778 793 ●[785] The ceremonial transfer of the sun dance bundle really begins with the fasting of the medicine woman on the first day. Neither she nor her husband are supposed to eat or drink while the sun is visible, and then but sparingly. On the evening before, they are put to bed by the father and mother. The mother places the daughter on the south side of the fire and the father the son on the north side. They must remain in the same position until morning. Before the sun rises the father and mother go to the medicine woman's tipi, stand by the door and sing. They sing as they formally enter, the father raising up the son; the mother, the daughter. The man is taken out by the father and the daughter by the mother for the morning toilet. When they return a small amount of food is fed to the son and daughter, after which the father and mother take a little food and drink. This must be before sunrise. During the day the son and especially the daughter must sit quietly in their places with bowed heads and eyes cast down. [292] [302] She wears a buffalo robe, hair side in, painted red, covering her head as well as her body. Her hair is not braided, but hangs down freely except for a horizontal band around the head. The hair may be allowed to conceal the entire face.

796 The daughter must do nothing for herself. If she wishes to speak it must be in almost a whisper in the ear of the mother or other attendant, who in turn will announce the import, if necessary. A fire is kept burning in the middle of the tipi, the ears are closely drawn around the smoke hole, the door closed, and the tipi cover securely staked down at the edges. [237] Though this keeps the temperature high, the medicine woman cannot use a fan, but may use the skin of a muskrat to wipe the perspiration from her face and hands.

796 785 784 During the fasting period no noise must be made in the tipi. All the attendants must avoid unnecessary conversation and speak in a very subdued tone; utensils must not be rattled or struck together. Visitors may enter, but respectfully and quietly. No noises should be made in the vicinity of the medicine tipi and boisterous acts abstained from in all parts of the camp circle. If water is brought in the vessel must be covered. No one should spit in the tipi nor do the other things forbidden at the ceremony of the tongues.

796 [372] [784] Throughout the whole period there is a male attendant. He keeps the fire alive during the night and until camp is moved. He can only start the fire with an ember from some other tipi, striking fire in the tipi being strictly prohibited.

bundle.[1] Yet, the conditions here are slightly different from those for other bundles in that the father must provide or is charged with the responsibility to see that a natoas is provided. Following the vow, either he or the son makes formal application to the owner of a natoas by the usual presentation of a pipe.[2] 796 778 432

When the daughter begins her fasting, the father has the natoas brought to her tipi. As a rule, the father's wife owns a natoas. Some informants claim that even should the daughter own a natoas, the father must provide another. On the other hand, the daughter can select the eligible natoas. In any case, the father furnishes the daughter with a dress and an elk robe for which he must be paid liberally.[3] [785] ● [124]

In conclusion, it may be remarked that anyone can make up a natoas, if he has a dream so directing him; also, if he owned a natoas that was lost or otherwise destroyed; if he gave it away, without receiving payment; or if it was buried with someone. Having owned a natoas and transferred it, he cannot duplicate it; should the new owner lose it, he may, if called upon, replace it; likewise, if buried, the surviving husband or wife could call upon him. In all such cases fees are given. When one transfers a medicine bundle and has been paid for it, he has no more right to it and cannot duplicate it on his own motion. Should one sell the bundle without the ceremony of transfer, the ritual remains with him and he can again make up the bundle; should one make the transfer and fail to receive the pay, or waive the pay, he can make it up again. The relatives of one buried with a bundle can call upon a former owner to make it up, after which it must be formally transferred to one of them. Men were sometimes killed on the warpath and their bundles lost; such were replaced as noted above. In every case these must be true duplicates; it is only a dream that authorizes new creations, or variations, however slight.

An interesting sidelight is thrown upon the idealized qualities of this woman's function by the following narrative:— 796 793

Once while a medicine woman was sleeping in the sacred tipi during the fasting, a nephew of her husband stole in and made improper advances. 837

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[1] In former times, the natoas and the medicine woman's costume were owned by a beaver man. When a woman gave a sun dance she gave a horse for their use. She just borrowed them. Later on, a beaver man transferred them. whence they became a separate bundle.— Tom Kiyo. [422] [778] [426]

[2] Should the woman already own a natoas and the transferrer (father) own one; the woman must say which bundle shall be used. She can use her own, borrow, or purchase of the transferrer.— Curly-bear.

[3] A Piegan informant comments as follows: The woman can either buy or borrow a natoas. In the olden times she often borrowed because the natoas, the dress, the elk tooth wristlets, and the robe were owned by a beaver man's wife. After a time, however, these were transferred to a medicine woman and were thus separated from the beaver bundle. [426]

SOCIETY DANCES.

575 In former times, the succeeding days were apportioned to the men's
554 societies (the ikunukats) in the order of their rank, beginning at the lowest.[1]
796 There seems to have been no fixed allotment of time to each, only the order
of succession being adhered to. The ceremonies were determined chiefly
[555] by the respective society rituals, though the recounting of deeds in war
was given great prominence. As a rule, each society closed its ceremonies
[782] by offering parts of its regalia, etc., to the sun, a custom still observed
by the Blood (See vol. 11, this series, fig. 19, p. 411). After the highest
society had completed its function, the leading men of the tribe held a
kind of a war dance in which coups were recounted. In this dance, again,
rattles were beaten upon a rawhide. The organizations or persons having
charge of the day's ceremonies must furnish the feast and all necessaries.
[793] The medicine woman and her husband usually repair to the dancing lodge
each day. The man usually takes his pipe and tobacco and furnishes the
smoking for the guests who sit around. His wife wears the buckskin dress
and elk robe, but not the natoas. They sit on the north or right side of
the booth and merely are spectators. This closes the ceremonies and camp
is broken.

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THE TORTURE CEREMONY.

796 The torture feature, especially prominent in the ceremonies of the
304 Mandan, Hidatsa, and Dakota, was formerly given a place among the danc-
[791] ing lodge ceremonies of the Blackfoot. The information we have seems
to indicate that this ceremony had not become thoroughly adjusted to
[648] its place in this series at the time of its prohibition by the United States
and Canadian governments. The claim is made by some of the Piegan
[177] that it was borrowed from the Arapaho and was not looked upon with much
favor. As one man expressed it, "None of those taking the cutting lived
to reach old age." It was said that a few Blackfoot warriors once visited
[177] the Arapaho at the time of their sun dance where they were put through
[424] the cutting ceremony. According to the Blackfoot mode of thought, this
means that the medicine rites (and rights) were transferred to them. When
they returned, they induced others to take the cutting, to whom, of course,
the rites were transferred. Whether this historical statement is accurate
or mythical, we have no means of knowing, but we are inclined to give

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[1] This series, Vol. 11, 205–474.

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796 it some weight as evidence. It seems, however, that warriors took the
304 cutting because of a vow, similar to that of the medicine woman. Some-
[782] times a man dreamed that the sun required it of him. The giving of property
[787] and the conditions of the transfer were the same as for "cutting the thong,"
though we have no information that "catching" was permitted. Such may,
[432] however, have been tolerated.

[824] The men taking the cutting were nude to the belt. Sage was tied
around the wrists and ankles. The hair hung down, held in place by a
wreath of cedar (some informants say sage). They were painted white.
[302] Rows of spots in blue extended down the sides of the face, over the shoulders
and down the arms. Wavy lines of the same color were also drawn down
[532] the arms. A circle representing the sun, was made on the breast, also
upon the chin and probably on the back opposite the one over the heart.
On the forehead was another circle representing the moon. Other informants say a crescent moon in black was used instead of these circles.

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796 According to one informant, vows were made to purchase this ceremony
304 when ill or in great danger. If the promise brought results, the vow was
432 fulfilled at the next dance. The supplicant calls upon one having purchased the rite. They enter the booth of the weather dancers, a blanket
[782] is held up to shut out the gaze of the others. The transferrer then paints
the purchaser. He cuts a hole through the skin of the right shoulder,
over the scapula, and a hole over each breast. A small sharpened stick
is thrust through each. A shield is hung on the back. Long cords were
fastened to those on the breast, the ends of which were tied fast, high up
to the center pole. The purchaser goes up to the pole, embraces it, and
cries for a time. Then he backs off, and dancing, throws his weight on
the ropes. The transferrer jerks the shield from his shoulders and if necessary, assists him in tearing loose. At once, the purchaser goes out into the
[787] hills and sleeps in different places to receive power.

[761] It is said that all who take this ceremony die in a few years, because
it is equivalent to giving one's self to the sun. Hence, the sun takes them
for his own.

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796 The cutting was similar to that described by Catlin and other writers as
304 observed elsewhere. Some informants say the dancers held whistles in their
mouths and gazed at the sun as they danced. When all the thongs were
[782] torn out, some of the lacerated flesh was cut off as an offering to the sun.

McLean reports the following observations upon this ceremony at a Blood sun dance:—

> ....The chief attraction to the pale-face is what has been ignorantly termed "making braves." I desired very much to see this ceremony once, that I might know the

796 facts from personal observation, and draw my own conclusions after conversing
304 with the Indians.

785 Two young men having their whole bodies painted, wearing the loin-cloth only, and with wreaths of leaves around their heads, ankles and wrists, stepped into the center of the lodge. A blanket and a pillow were laid on the ground, and one of the young men stretched himself upon them. As he lay, an old man came forward and stood over him and then in an earnest speech told the people of the brave deeds, and noble heart of the young man. In the enumeration of his virtues and noble deeds, after each separate statement the musicians beat applause. When the aged orator ceased, the young man arose, placed his hands upon the old man's shoulders, and drew them downward, as a sign of gratitude for the favorable things said about him. He lay down, and four men held him while a fifth made the incisions in his breast and back. Two places were marked in each breast denoting the position and width of each incision. This being done, the wooden skewers being in readiness, a double edged knife was held in the hand, the point touching the flesh, a small piece of wood was placed on the under side to receive the point of the knife when it had gone through, and the flesh was drawn out the desired length for the knife to pierce. A quick pressure and the incision was made, the piece of wood was removed, and the skewer inserted from the under-side as the knife was being taken out. When the skewer was properly inserted, it was beaten down with the palm of the hand of the operator, that it might remain firmly in its place. This being done to each breast, with a single skewer for each, strong enough to tear away the flesh, and long enough to hold the lariats fastened to the top of the sacred pole, a double incision was made on the back of the left shoulder, to the skewer of which was fastened an Indian drum. The work being pronounced good by the persons engaged in the operation, the young man arose, and one of the operators fastened the lariats giving them two or three jerks to bring them into position.

The young man went up to the sacred pole, and while his countenance was exceedingly pale, and his frame trembling with emotion, threw his arms around it, and prayed earnestly for strength to pass successfully through the trying ordeal. His prayer ended he moved backward until the flesh was fully extended, and placing a small bone whistle in his mouth, he blew continuously upon it a series of short sharp sounds, while he threw himself backward, and danced until the flesh gave way and he fell. Previous to his tearing himself free from the lariats, he seized the drum with both hands and with a sudden pull tore the flesh on his back, dashing the drum to the ground amid the applause of the people. As he lay on the ground, the operators examined his wounds, cut off the flesh that was hanging loosely, and the ceremony was at an end. In former years the head of a buffalo was fastened by a rope on the back of the person undergoing the feat of self-immolation, but now a drum is used for that purpose.

From two to five persons undergo this torture every Sun-Dance. Its object is military and religious. It admits the young man into the noble band of warriors, whereby he gains the esteem of his fellows, and opens up the path to fortune and fame. But it is chiefly a religious rite. In a time of sickness, or danger, or in starting upon some dangerous expedition, the young man prays to Natos for help, and promises to give himself to Natos if his prayers are answered. Upon his return, when the Annual Sun-Dance is held, he fulfills his vow, gives himself to his god, and thus performs a twofold duty. Of course the applause of the people and the exhibition of courage are important factors in this rite, but its chief feature is a religious one.

796 304 785 Instead of being a time of feasting and pleasure, the Sun-Dance is a military and religious festival, in connection with which there are occasions for joy, and the feast enhances the pleasure.[1]

782 304 785 It may be well to note that the offering of bits of flesh to the sun was a general practice not necessarily associated with the sun dance. Many comparatively young men now living (1904) bear numerous scars testifying to such offerings. When in perilous situations a finger would sometimes be struck off with a call upon the sun for help. Among the Blood, such sacrifice of a finger by women as well as men was common at the sun dance.[2] These facts concerning the more general practice of mutilating the body to win the approval of the sun suggest that if the cutting ceremony is intrusive, it either found on hand a series of analogous customs or brought with it a concept that afterwards gave birth to them. It may be observed [178] that the form of costume and dance is strikingly like that employed by the present weather dancers.

782 304 785 726 539 Since there seems to be no good published data on the sacrificing of skin and fingers we append the narrative of Split-ears:—

> Sometimes, when warriors are on an expedition and come in sight of the enemy they will sit in a circle while the leader, or the oldest member of the party, offers prayers that they may succeed in their undertaking. Then they proceed to offer bits of their own skin to the sun. The one who prayed sits down by one of the party, takes up a needle or bodkin and a knife, thrusts the former under a small section of skin and raising it, cuts off a small slice with a knife. This leaves a circular wound a quarter of an inch or less in diameter. It is understood that the operator pulls the skin up with the needle and slices off a small section underneath that instrument. He then takes up some black paint and dips the bit of skin into it. Then he holds it up to the sun and prays for the success of his victim. The bit of skin is then placed upon a piece of cloth and another is removed from the victim in the same manner and so the operator goes to each of the party in turn, each time removing a piece of skin, dipping it in black paint, and holding it up in a prayer to the sun. While each person is expected to give two pieces, they are not limited to the maximum number, some men giving four and some still more. The bits of skin thus collected are tied up in one corner of the cloth which is mounted upon a stick wrapped with wild sage, the whole being fastened in a tree or set up on the top of a high hill as the

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[113] [1] McLean, John, "The Blackfoot Sun Dance" (*Proceedings of the Canadian Institute*, third series, vol. 6, Toronto, 1888), 235–237.

[2] McLean, as an eye-witness to such a sacrifice, gives the following:—

"As I stood outside the lodge, a young Indian friend of mine, went to an old medicine-woman and presented his sacrifice to Natos. During the year he had gone on a horse-stealing expedition and as is customary on such occasions had prayed to Natos for protection and success, offering himself to his god if his prayers were answered. He had been successful and he now presented himself as a sacrifice. The old woman took his hand held it toward the Sun and prayed, then laying a finger on a block of wood she severed it with one blow from a knife and deer's horn scraper. She held the portion of the finger cut off toward the Sun and dedicated that to him as the young man's sacrifice." (p. 235.)

782 sun's offering. This sacrifice is always spoken of as feeding the sun with flesh from
304 one's own body. The cloth is fastened to the stick in the form of a flag or banner
so that it waves in the wind with the flesh offerings tied in one corner. This sacrifice
785 is considered one of the greatest a man can make.

726 Now, as I have said, some men only give two small pieces of skin, while others
give a great many more, but as they do this each time they go on an expedition,
539 it so happens that a man who made many war expeditions has many small scars
on his arms and legs. Thus, we can still tell those of our old men who went upon the
warpath many times in their youth. We can tell by the scars made from feeding
782 the sun their own flesh. But, again, it so happens that men while at home may have
304 dreams in which they are commanded to feed the sun. Now it is believed that
785 unless a man heeds such a command, he is certain to be visited by misfortune or
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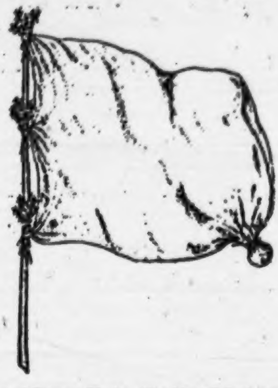

Fig. 1. The Offering of Human Flesh. The bits of flesh are tied in the corner of the banner. Drawn from a native sketch.

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304 even death, so he always makes haste to comply with the command. After such
785 a dream he makes a sweathouse and invites in an old man who prays and makes the
539 offering. The procedure here is the same as previously described and the offering
is made into a banner and placed in a tree or upon a hill. Then again, the men who
[787] are at home in the camp but who have relatives in a war party may so wish for the
(726) safety of these that they themselves offer bits of skin in their behalf. Thus, you see,
there are many times when people will offer bits of skin, so that it was not uncommon
for a man to have one hundred or more scars upon his body. These are generally
arranged in rows up and down the arms, down the legs, down the breasts and the
back. I have even heard of cases where a man is said to have offered one hundred
pieces of skin at one time. This, however, was unusual.

[726] Sometimes, instead of offering skin, the warrior would offer a finger. Thus,
if beset by very great danger on the warpath a man may make a vow to the sun

stating that if brought home safely he will sacrifice a finger. This sacrifice can be 782
made at any time; either when on the warpath or when at home in camp or at the 304
sun dance. In such cases, the finger is offered to the sun in the precise manner as 785
the pieces of skin described above. 539

There are, however, occasions upon which fingers are cut off that are not offerings [776]
to the sun. Thus, people who are in mourning sometimes sacrifice a finger. In [765]
those cases it is usual to call upon some old woman who is skilled in the amputation.
She cuts off the finger, usually reciting a kind of ritual, but it is not offered to the sun.
It is simply thrown away. Then again babies' fingers are sometimes cut off to give [777]
the child good luck. Thus, if a woman lost many children she would call upon an
old woman to make the sacrifice for her newly born. In this case, the tip end of a
finger is cut off and wrapped up in a piece of meat which the mother is required to
swallow. This is supposed to insure the child's living to maturity. It had no
connection with the sun.

I have told you how men are called upon to cut off pieces of skin and how certain 539
old women were selected to amputate fingers. You should also know that in olden 763
times there were some women and men who might be called upon to cut open dead
persons for various reasons. Sometimes they did this on their own account in order
to get information as to the cause of death.

These accounts show for one thing that the cutting ceremony in the sun 782
dance is but one of a type of blood and flesh offerings, made to the sun, in 304
fulfillment of a vow. The sacrifice of a finger is more frequent and less 785
specialized, though frequently done at the sun dance. Then comes the
very frequent offering of bits of skin, a sacrifice common in war raids at all
times. The offering of bits of skin in the precise manner described here is [191]
found elsewhere in the Plains. The writer has observed men so scarred
among several divisions of the Dakota. The method of removing the skin
was here the same as followed by the Blackfoot. The thrusting in of the
awl has a curious similarity to the cutting and skewering in the sun dance;
one may even be pardoned for wondering if it did not so arise.

SUN DANCE SONGS.

Two songs have a special place in the ceremony. They are sung by 796
the men as they ride into camp with the willows for the hundred-willow 533
sweathouse. They are sung again when the procession of pole raisers moves up to raise the sun pole. Formerly, they were sung by any considerable body of the tribe approaching the camp of strange Indians. Likewise, when they approached a post to open trade.[1]

Red-plume, a Piegan, has a smudge stick on which are notches said

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[1] For musical notation see McClintock, Walter, *The Old North Trail, or Life, Legends and Religion of the Blackfoot Indians* (London, 1910), 311. [113]

off with two of Fox Eyes' catch. But Badger Woman caught him 525
in the act, snatched the hides from him, and scolded: "You nothing 593
one! You always-losing gambler! Taking of our son's beaver trappings that I am saving until there will be enough of them to buy him a many-shots gun like the one *Apikuni*, here, has. You know how hard it is for him, with his old powder-and-ball gun to provide us with the meat and hides that we need. But still you would steal of his catches to gamble them off! Oh, you shameless, you hard-minded one!" And at that, without a word of reply, Crazy Dog returned to his cronies, lost all of the tobacco that he had, and then came to me begging for more.

"You know how it is," he whispered. "I am so crippled that I cannot hunt. So I gamble. My woman, of course, she scolds me, but I don't mind it. Her heart is good. Well, *Apikuni*, sneak to me some of your tobacco and I will again try to win—plenty win."

Said Fox Eyes to me on the following morning: "*Apikuni*, you 785
know that I have never endured the sacred fast. I have never had 787
time for it; my father crippled, unable to hunt, I have, ever since I
grew up, been the sole provider for our lodge. But now the time has
come when I must have my fast. So this I ask of you: be you our [123]
hunter, provider of meat, while I endure it."

"Yes, I will be your family's hunter; but why are you now so minded to fast sacredly?" I said.

"Because I want to be a real man, a warrior, a member of the [183]
Doves, or the Raven Carriers, or some other band of the All Friends [575]
warriors society. I have already decided upon my fasting place: a
cliff facing Big River and close above the mouth of this South Bear
River."

Badger Woman and Little Bird Woman, listening to our talk, be- 785
came excited and pleased. Said the mother: "Oh, Fox Eyes! Oh, my 787
son! I am so glad that, at last, you are to do this. Too long have you 156
been a lonely, friendless one, unable to join a war party, unable to [575]
take part in the dances and the happy feast gatherings of any of the
All Friends bands. But now all that is to end. Oh, how proud I shall
be of you, someday seeing you returning with a war party, waving
enemy scalps, singing the victory song, riding and driving before
you enemy horses."

787 And said Little Bird Woman: "Oh, brother, after your fast, join
785 Seizers; they are the best clothed, best singers and dancers of all of
575 the warrior bands."

"No, you will join the Raven Carriers, they such always-successful warriors. My father, my brother were members of it," the mother said.

785 There followed some argument between mother and son over
787 which of the medicine men (Sun priests) should be asked to pray
[778] for his safety and success in his lone and strenuous fast. The result
was that Fox Eyes brought in his horses, roped and led one of them before the lodge of Black Otter, owner of the sacred Thunder Pipe bundle, gave him the horse and said: "*Haiyu!* Oh, powerful, Sun-favored Thunder Pipe man. I am to undergo my lone fast. Help me. Pray for me!"

346 "Yes. Build a sweat lodge at once and I will join you in it," the old man answered.

Badger Woman, her daughter, and some of their women friends were already building the sweat lodge. In shape it was a semisphere, about ten feet in diameter; its frame, of willows; its covering, an old lodge-skin. In its center a small pit was dug; and lastly, in the near-by fire, some stones were set to heat.

783 Came presently Black Otter with his sacred pipe, a wooden bowl,
793 and a buffalo tail; and he and Fox Eyes went into the little lodge,
[778] undressed, thrust out their clothing, and naked sat. The women
passed in the red-hot rocks, and with a stick Fox Eyes rolled them
into the pit; lastly, the old man's bowl, filled with water, was passed
533 to him. He dipped the buffalo tail in it, sprinkled the rocks, and, as
782 dense steam began to fill the lodge, he sang the first one of his Thun-
der Pipe songs and then fervently prayed Sun to protect Fox Eyes,
to give him success in the lone fast which he was about to endure.
[821] Followed more sprinklings of rocks; more songs; more prayers to
Sun, Night Light (the moon), the Seven Persons (constellation of
778 Ursa Major), and Thunderbird. Lastly, with the sacred pipe in hand,
776 Fox Eyes prayed the Above Ones for success in his undertaking, for
782 long life and happiness for his family, and for all of the people of his
tribe.

tribe. We were a crowd of men and women sitting close around 783
the little sweat lodge, listening to it all; the prayers and songs, solemn,
fervently impressive, heart stirring, they brought tears to all eyes.
Finally the old man and Fox Eyes reached out for their blankets, and, [515]
wrapped in them, came out and with heads bowed walked slowly
to the river to bathe and dress.

On the following morning, accompanied by his mother, sister, 787
and a half-dozen men relatives for protection, Fox Eyes rode off for 785
his fasting place, and I joined a party of hunters. We were back long [793]
before sundown with the choice parts of some buffalo cows we had [533]
killed, just in time to see old Black Otter riding the round of the [782]
camp, stopping occasionally to sing a sacred song, pray, and call
upon the people to pray for the safety and success of Fox Eyes in
his lone and strenuous fast.

Three mornings later Badger Woman, Little Bird Woman, and I rode out to visit the faster. At the mouth of Crooked Creek we turned up the valley of the Missouri and then up to the foot of a cliff, where we left our horses, climbed for a time, and turned off upon a narrow shelf of the cliff; presently we came to Fox Eyes in a cavelike depression formed by the overhanging rock. Wrapped in his blanket, he was lying upon a buffalo robe, and at his side were his gun and a red-painted, empty, water bowl. "*Ha!* Here you are: mother, sister, and my good friend *Apikuni*, too," he said.

"Of course," I answered. "I shall come often to see you if I may."
We sat down beside him, and his mother emptied a bladder skin of [415]
water that she had brought into the wooden bowl; carefully he raised [237]
it, took a few slight sips of the water, said that he would like to drink
it all.

"You haven't yet had a vision?" his mother asked.

"Last night, the beginning of one," he answered. "I was walking in 825
a valley, in a grassy length of it. A big longtail (cougar) came out 787
from the timber, and I said to it: 'Oh, you powerful, always-successful killer of your food. I am poor. Pity me. Help me; give me of your power; help me to live a long and successful life.' He looked at me, turning his head this way and that way. At last he answered: 'You

787 want me to be your sacred helper. Well, I think that I can . . . .' And
[825] then, seeming to see or hear something that frightened him, he went
leaping back into the timber, and I awoke and could not sleep again."

785 "Oh, too bad. Too bad," his mother wailed. "And you so desirous
787 to obtain a helpful vision. And so hungry, thirsty. Oh, I worry about
you, here likely to be discovered by some enemy war party that may
[782] come along. Well, this day I shall sacrifice to Sun for you. Yes, I
[292] shall give him my best, elk-teeth-trimmed gown, pray him to give
[237] you quickly a helpful vision and let you safely return to us."

"Yes. Do that. And this I say to you: Do not return here until five
[782] nights have passed. Your coming disturbs me. I must be alone, have
constant quiet in order to obtain a helpful vision. So now go, and
[776] I pray Sun to keep you safe, you three."

"Oh, my son, my son," his mother wailed. "You to lie here five nights without our help? Why, you would die from want of water."

"No. One can live longer than that without food or water. And it may be that I shall obtain my vision this coming night, or tomorrow night. And now go. It is that I must be alone and pray."

782 Soon after we returned to camp, Badger Woman made a tight roll
of her beautiful, valuable, elk-trimmed ceremonial gown, went out
[776] and tied it to a limb of a tree. With fervent prayer she gave it to Sun;
she sought the great sky god to protect Fox Eyes in his lone fast and
to give him a powerful vision. And there the gown would remain,
gradually disintegrated by wind and weather. None, not even an
enemy war party, would dare to steal a gift to Sun.

787 Five mornings later I went again with the women to the faster
785 in the niche in the cliff, and was surprised at the change in his appearance in that short time. Emaciated and pale, he lay upon his robe, and feebly he raised a hand to greet us. But he happily smiled and said, almost whispered: "I have been given that which I sought. Take me home.

822 "Last night, as I slept after long and earnestly praying," he began,
828 "I, my shadow (soul, spirit), left my body and traveled far, crossing
787 a great plain. After a long time I came to the edge of a valley and saw
a river in it, and I was glad, for I was very thirsty. Down I ran to it,
and to the murmuring of the swift stream. Never had I heard so pleas-

24: Schultz F-3 (1877-1947) 1980 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

Bison Skulls on Chief Mountain[1]

(Told by *Ahko Pitsu*)

237 It was in 1902, if I rightly remember, that Henry L. Stimson and William H. Seward III decided to climb Chief Mountain at the east edge of the region which was in 1910 to become Glacier National Park. But disdaining the easy ascent to its summit from the west, they chose to climb its south, precipitous side. Accompanied by their guide, *Paiota Satsiko* ("Comes-with-Rattles"), they set out early of an autumn morning and with great risk of their lives made the ascent, arriving at the summit at noon. There, to their great surprise, where buffalo could not possibly come, owing to a last, clifflike rise of the ridge on the west, they found three buffalo skulls: two of them very old and weather worn, the other one still in a good state of preservation.

Stimson mused: "It is strange that these buffalo skulls should be here. Long-ago Indians must have brought them up, but why? What reason could they have had for doing it?"

787 Said Comes-with-Rattles: "They came here to fast, to pray for
782 visions as they slept, and brought these buffalo skulls for pillows.
237 That much I know about it."

785 But though Stimson and Seward questioned him, he could tell them no more. When of but few years, his father had been killed in the Baker Massacre of 1870, and his brothers-in-law, Kipp and Upham, had raised him, kept him with them, so he knew but little of the lore of his Pikuni people.

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[1] Published in *The Great Falls Tribune* (January 23, 1938).

real-bear, besought him as he loved his women and children, for 787
help. Said he: 'I have been thinking about your troubles, your fail- 154
ures in hunting and in your raids upon our enemies. Now, tell me
something that you will not like to tell, but that I must know if I
am to help you. It is this. In your youth—your before-marriage time
—you endured your sacred fast. Well, what was the helpful vision
that you then had?'

"His request surprised me. It is between the gods and the sacred [776]
faster, the vision that they give him. But this was different. Talks-
with-the-Buffalo was a very powerful sacred-pipe man, close to the
gods. He would not ask of me anything that would do me harm.
Anyhow, I would risk it. So I gave him the name of the animal that
had come to me in my vision and promised to help me in all that I
should do. 'What did that animal tell you that you should do in
return for his help?'

"When I had told him of that, and fully, he asked if I had always [782]
done as the animal had said I must do, and I had to confess that I had
once failed. I had forgotten to make a certain sacrifice to the Above
Ones, and a dog had eaten it.

"'*Ha!* And thereafter your bad-luck times began. You should have 787
told me of it long ago. And now it is that you will have to endure an- 785●
other sacred fast, try to obtain another powerful helper. Yes, and I 159
know the very place for it. The top of Chief Mountain. There where
Eagle Head obtained the vision that enabled him to become the most
powerful warrior and successful hunter that our tribe ever had. Yes.
There you must fast, taking up there with you, as he did, a buffalo [23]
head for your pillow.'

"'I do not like to go so far from our people to fast,' I answered.

"'We will move up close to the mountain. I will advise Big Lake
and our other chiefs to do it,' he said.

"The chiefs willingly granted his request, and three days later
we made camp on Many Chiefs' River (St. Mary) and not far from
the foot of Chief Mountain. On the following day Talks-with-the- [5/5]
Buffalo had a sweat lodge made, and in it, as we perspired, he prayed [782]
Sun and all the Above Ones, and his own sacred helper, too, to give [776]
me strength to endure a sacred fast and to give me a helpful vision.
And again he loaned me his gun.

785 "So on the next morning we mounted our horses and set out for
787 the mountain, Talks-with-the-Buffalo, my two women, and I. Upon
154 our way to it, I took up the whitened, dry head of a buffalo bull that
[237] had been killed in the run of a herd that our hunters had made three
summers back. Arrived at the mountain, we rode up the west slope
of it as far as our horses could carry us and then, leaving them,
climbed up to the summit, arriving there a little after Sun had passed
the center of the blue. In a small, level place on the very top of the
mountain, we found the buffalo head that Eagle Head had used for
a pillow and another head brought up there by some far-back sacred
faster of our people.

"My women had brought along my bedding, two buffalo robes
and a blanket. They went back down the slope, got some pine
branches and made a good bed for me, placing the buffalo head at
the west end of it so that I could see Sun as he came every morning
[782] to travel across the blue. Then Talks-with-the-Buffalo again prayed
[533] *for me, and, crying, my women joined him in singing some sacred*
songs. And then they left me. For a little I stood, looking off at our
great plain, at our Pine Needles Buttes (Sweetgrass Hills), at our
Bear Paw Mountains, much farther to the east. Would I ever camp
[782] and hunt among them again? Earnestly I prayed Sun for help, for
a good vision, and stretched out upon my couch.

"I slept continuously, had no vision on that night. Awoke hungry
and thirsty, became more so as the day wore on. For two more nights
782 I lay there, sleeping at times, becoming weak from want of food and
785 water, often praying the Above Ones for help. At last they took pity
787 on me. On my fourth night there they gave me a very sacred vision.
776 Came to me a certain animal that frequents the water, all but lives in
154 it, and said that he would help me in all of my undertakings; and
that in return for his help I should do certain things for him in the
way of prayers and sacrifices. Oh, how pleased I was. Although so
weak that I could hardly stand, still I felt that I had power to do
great deeds.

787 "As they had agreed to do, next morning came Talks-with-the-
776 Buffalo and my women to learn how I was getting along, and pleased
154

535 promise between the old and the new. The pre-Lent dance, for example, is the last
177 dance for forty days, as the Bloods, who are predominantly Anglican (Episcopalian)
[785] and Roman Catholic, forego dancing during Lent. This is the first year of the pre-Lent
[795] dance and is another step in the adaptation of native ceremonies to modern customs.

575 Another sponsor of dances, as mentioned earlier, is the Horn Society. This totally
177 non-Christian religious group has also shown a compromise with the Church by sponsoring
[535] the annual Christmas Dance. A powerful society even today, the Horns play a
[776] vital role in the summer Sun Dance (*oḳan*) ceremonies, which are the basis of the native religion of the Bloods.

575 Members for the Horns are taken from the age-group societies and, originally, were
561 changed every four years. However, the period of membership in the Horns has lately varied from two to four years, depending upon the activity of the group. Membership in this society is decided upon in an alternating pattern similar to the dance sponsorships. For example, the Horn Society members were chosen from the Eagle society in 1951 and, upon the completion of their term, one of the odd-numbered societies will provide the new members.

[535] During the sponsorship of the Christmas dance, the Horns may also call upon the allies of their parent group for assistance. During the 1952 Christmas dance, the Horns, *who were predominantly from the Eagles,* were permitted to seek assistance from any of the even-numbered societies.

575 Thus, through this complex social organization, a keen and wholesome rivalry is
561 constantly being stimulated to produce the best dances. Some members are ordered to
535 provide food or soda pop; some decorate the hall and set the stage for the important
[578] night. Other members of the group, whether rich or poor, are solicited for gifts of cash or blankets to meet the heavy expenses of the evening.

[626] In speaking to a member of the Magpies shortly before the New Year's dance, it was learned that he had been ordered to bring fifty sandwiches and would be fined $10 by his society if he failed to comply.

The recognized leaders of the society sponsoring a dance usually divide the responsibilities as much as possible among their own group and then turn to their allies for
533 specialized assistance. The principal specialists needed for an Owl Dance are the
535 singers, a dance announcer, and the Chicken Dancers.

The singers both carry the tempo of the dance on the drum and accompany it with the traditional Owl Dance songs. Therefore, to make sure the music will be of the highest quality, the societies call upon certain members who are outstanding in singing for each dance sponsored by their allies. Such men as Percy Plainswoman, Harry Shade, and Alex Little Shield are typical examples of the singers who are most likely to be called upon whenever an allied society presents a dance.

So, too, with the dance announcer. This man is responsible for urging the people to dance and for announcing changes in the dancing routine. Both the even-numbered and odd-numbered societies have two or three elders who are particularly adept at announcing, and they are continually called upon to take part in the activities.

535 The Chicken Dancers are the men who provide the entertainment at the dance. After every Owl Dance, these gaily-clad performers strut onto the floor and imitate the intricate steps of a male prairie chicken vying for the favor of a hen. These dancers make use of sleigh bells, hoops, masks, feathers, and colorful clothing to put on an

of these Indians were full-bloods. A goodly number had more than one white 178
grandparent. These Indians, with few exceptions, had become Christians – the 797
great majority of them Roman Catholics. Even the oldest of the full-bloods who [144]
died during those years received Christian funerals at which a priest or minister [764]
officiated in the services in the church and at the cemetery. I served as a [123]
pallbearer in several of those services. Yet I noticed that after the white [782]
clergyman formally entrusted the body to the earth, it was customary for an
aged Indian to step forward and deliver a fervent prayer in his own language,
before the assembled mourners dispersed.

During those years no young men fasted and sought visions in isolated 178
localities. There were no painted shields among these Indians, who had not gone [785]
to war against enemy tribes for more than a half century. Yet more than a score [787]
of veterans of the intertribal wars, their wives, or widows, were still living. They [778]
formed the nucleus of that portion of the tribe who gathered each summer to [714]
participate in the sun dance. There were nearly a score of painted lodges in the [728]
sun dance encampment behind the museum near Browning in 1942. Owners of [796]
medicine-pipe bundles still opened them in a ritual manner after the first [773]
thunder in spring; and the sacred horse medicine cult was still active. Older
full-bloods still recited in fascinating detail the beautiful myths which told of the
origins of the medicine bundles and religious rituals of the Blackfoot. Nearly a
century after Father Point's pioneer Christian missionary endeavors among these
Indians, traditional Blackfoot religion, such as was interpreted by that unnamed
artist in 1847, was still very much alive.

NOTES

1. I am indebted to Holt, Rinehart and Winston of New York and to Loyola University Press, Chicago, for permission to reprint this plate. 000
2. This letter, as quoted by Father De Smet, is not dated. Presumably it was written in 1847 (Smet 1905: III: 953-54).

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39: Ewers E,G-4,5 (1941-1944) 1948
NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Blood

ETHNOLOGY.

—*Self-torture in the Blood Indian sun dance.*[1]

U. S. National Museum.

JOHN C. EWERS,

When George Catlin, the artist and 114
Indian enthusiast, published (1841) the 171
first graphic account of the practice of
self-torture in a Plains Indian ceremony, 175
which he had witnessed in 1832, his de-
scription was termed fantastic by D. D. 185
Mitchell, Superintendent of Indian Affairs. Apparently shocked by Catlin's vivid portrayal of coolly premeditated self-sacrifice of human flesh and blood by participants in the Okipa ceremony of the Mandan, Mitchell declared, "The scenes described by Catlin, existed almost entirely in the fertile imagination of that gentleman" (Schoolcraft, vol. 3, p. 254; Catlin, vol. 1. pp. 157–177).

Catlin's description was substantiated, however, some years before Mitchell's accusations were made, by the Independent Mandan investigations of Prince Maximilian in 1833–34, (Maximilian, vol. 23, pp. 324–334). Catlin was defended strongly by the intelligent fur trader James Kipp, who had

[p. 166]

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[1] Received January 30, 1948.

been with Catlin when he witnessed the 114
ceremony (Kipp, pp. 436–438).

Since the days of that historic contro- 171
versy, the practice of self-torture in tribal 175
sun-dance ceremonies has been reported, on 785
reliable authority, as once characteristic of the Arapaho, Arikara, Assiniboin, Canadian Dakota, Cheyenne, Crow, Gros Ventres, Hidatsa, Oglala Dakota, Plains Cree, Plains Ojibway, Sarcee, Sisseton Dakota, and the three Blackfoot tribes (Spier, pp. 473–475). Furthermore, brief accounts have been published of ceremonial self-torture, witnessed as early as 1805, among the Arikara and Hidatsa by the fur traders Pierre-Antoine Tabeau and Charles Mackenzie (Tabeau, pp. 191–193; Mackenzie, pp. 354–357).

It seems most probable that some Plains 175
tribes practiced forms of self-torture in the 785
period before first white contact.

Among the Plains Indian tribes of the 171
United States the practice of self-torture
was prohibited more than 60 years ago. 785
This ban resulted from the combined op-
position of missionaries and the civil and 657
military branches of the Federal Government to such self-imposed cruelties, which tended to excite the Indians, to perpetuate both Indian-white and intertribal hostilities, and to make difficult the process of civilization and Christianization of the Indians.

Published descriptions of self-torture 114
among these tribes have been primarily of
two kinds. Some were eye-witness accounts 785
of interested but untrained white observers who not infrequently misinterpreted the purpose of the torture as a ceremony for "making braves." Others were based on the testimony of older Indians who had witnessed the tortures some years earlier but had not experienced torture themselves. Detailed case histories from the mouths of men who had submitted themselves to torture are few and fragmentary in the extensive literature on the sun dance.

Self-torture survived in the sun dances of 785
the Blood and North Blackfoot Indians of 178
southern Alberta for a few years after its
discontinuance among the Plains tribes of
this country. In the course of field work on 101
the Blood Reserve in September, 1947, the 115

[p.167-A]

writer met two elderly full-bloods who had 101
been tortured in the sun dance of their 115
tribe. They were the last survivors of men
of that tribe who had experienced this
ordeal, and they were particularly desirous 115
that their torture experiences should be 124
recorded accurately. These narratives by
Scraping White (now 81 years old) and 785 ●
Heavy Head (now 78), related to the writer 796
through the interpreter Percy Creighton,
provide new and significant information
on the procedure of self-torture in the
Blood sun dance ceremony and its meaning
to those who submitted to it. They help to [121]
round out the only published description
of the Blood self-torture, that of the missionary John McLean, who witnessed the
ceremony prior to 1889.

In the summer of 1889 the Blood medicine 796
lodge was erected on the north bank of the 785
Kootenay River, in southern Alberta. Three young men, Scraping White (then 23 years of age), Tough Bread (now deceased), and Heavy Head (then 20 years old), presented themselves to be tortured.

Scraping White described his experience thus:

> Three of us tortured ourselves in the sun dance that year—Tough Bread, Heavy Head, and I. I was the oldest of the three.
>
> I was on a war party to take horses from the 726
> Assiniboine when I made my vow to be tortured. Shortly before the sun went down, when 785
> we were in sight of the enemy camp, I turned
> to the sun and said, "I want good luck. Now I 796
> go to the enemy. I want to capture a good horse and go home safely. I'll be tortured this coming sun dance." As soon as it was dark I went into the enemy camp and took two fast horses out of their corral without any of them knowing it. I had good luck and reached home safely.
>
> Then I told my relatives of the vow I had 796
> made. Yellow Horn, an older relative, who had
> been through the torture before, told me, "Put 785
> up a sweat lodge for me and I shall look after you." I made the sweat lodge the very next day.
>
> Not long after that the sun dance was held. The torture took place the day after the center pole was raised for the medicine lodge. I was the first one to be tortured. The torture began about noon. Old Yellow Horn cut my breasts
> with an iron arrowhead and inserted a skewer
> through the cuts at each breast. These skewers [824]
> were of serviceberry wood, flattened on both

[P.167-B]

796 785 sides, thinned toward the ends but not sharpened, and about this long. [Scraping White indicated a distance of about 2 inches between his thumb and forefinger.] Then sinew was wrapped around the ends of the skewers and they were tied, each skewer to a 4-strand plaited rawhide rope. The two ropes were fastened at their far ends to the center pole at its forks.

796 785 782 [535] I stood up and Yellow Horn told me, "Now you walk up, put your arms around the center pole and pray. Tell sun, now your vow is being fulfilled." I did just as he told me. Then I stepped back. Yellow Horn pulled hard on the rawhide ropes attached to the skewers. Then I danced. I didn't dance long before my flesh gave way and the skewers pulled out. Yellow Horn came to me and cut the skin that had broken. He trimmed it off even. Then he gave me the pieces of skin he had cut away and told me to take them and stick them in the ground at the base of the center pole, saying, "Now sun, I have completed my vow."

785 Heavy Head's narrative of his torture experience was still more detailed:

726 721 785 There were only two of us, Buffalo Teeth, my partner, and I. We went to war together to take horses. At Medicine Hat we found a small camp of Cree half-breeds. It was night when we saw their camp. It was moonlight. I looked up at the moon and prayed to it, "I shall be tortured at the sun dance if I have good luck and get home safely." Then I stole up to the camp and got one bay that was tied in front of a lodge without any of the enemy waking or seeing me. Buffalo Teeth took a roan. We started back to the Blood camp, traveled three days and three nights with no food other than a black rabbit. We got awfully weak and hungry.

785 554 [533] [796] When I reached home I told my story to my father, Water Bull. The old man got up and sang his encouraging song. Then he told me, "My son, you have done something worth doing. You have made a vow that you will be tortured at the sun dance. You must do it this coming sun dance."

781 752 A few days later I went out to the east point of Belly Butte to fast. While I fasted I dreamed that a sacred person came to me and gave me a drum and certain herbs to use for doctoring. Then I returned home.

785 796 A short time after that the bands began to come together for the sun dance encampment. I prepared myself to go to an old man named Little Bear, a relative of mine, who had been through the torture himself, years before. I

filled my pipe and took it to him. I gave him the 796
pipe and a buckskin horse, and said, "Here is a
horse for you. Keep this pipe too. I want you to 785
look after me in the torture." When I gave him
the pipe he put it down and went over to the [431]
next lodge. There were two old men there, Green
Grass Bull and Red Bead. These men were not
related to me, but they were both older than
Little Bear, and both had been through the
torture. Little Bear asked them to come to his [782]
lodge, to take my pipe and pray for me. After
they prayed, they told me not to take any food 785
or water the day I was to be tortured.

The day before the torture I ate or drank 264
nothing. Next day I ate or drank nothing until
after the torture. However, the three old men
gave me some sagebrush to chew.

I was the last of the three Blood Indians to 785
undergo the torture that day. Scraping White,
who was the oldest, was first. Then Tough 796
Bread, then I. I was the youngest. Inside the
medicine lodge, on the west side of the center
pole and north of the weather dancer's arbor, a
shelter was built of sticks like a sweat lodge,
covered with willow leaves. I went in there before
noon of the day of the torture. I was laid on
my back with my head pointed north. I was [292]
barefoot, and wore only a breechcloth made
from a small, red, trade shawl purchased from
the Hudson's Bay Company. There was a little 785
bowl of white paint and another of black paint
nearby. The three old men painted four black 796
dots, one below the other, under each of my 302
eyes. This was called "tear paint." If I cried
the tears would run down there. Then they
painted a double row of six black dots on each
arm. They painted the symbol of the moon,
points up, on my forehead in black. On the outside
of each of my legs they painted a double
row of six black dots. The rest of my body was
painted white, also my face. They took some of 785
the broad-leafed sagebrush from the ground
inside the sweat lodge and bound it together, 796
placed a wreath of it around my head, and 824
bands of it around each wrist and ankle.

I was taken from the sweat lodge and laid
upon a blanket on the ground at the north side 785
of the center pole with my head to the north, 796
my feet toward the center pole. Other people
were told to keep back away from me. Then an
old man named Low Horn was brought forward.
He counted four of his coups. The three
old men, Little Bear, Red Bead, and Green
Grass Bull, held me—one at each arm, and one
at my head. Red Bead took a sharp, iron arrowhead
in his hand, and asked me, "How do
you want me to cut them? Thick or thin?" I
said, "Thin." (I learned later that this question

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 170-A]

39: Ewers E,G-4,5 (1941-1944) 1948
NF6 Blackfoot NF6
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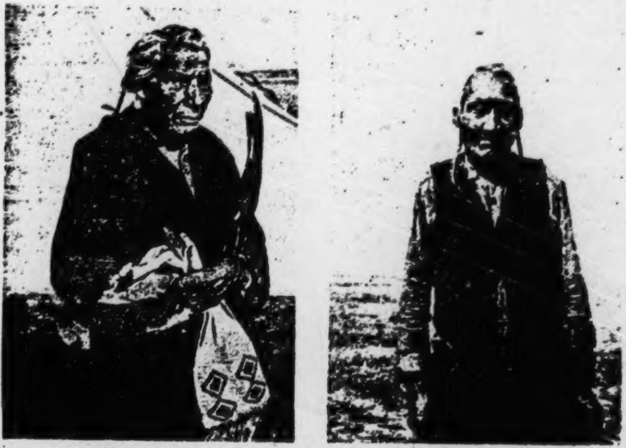

Fig. 1.—Scraping White (left) and Heavy Head (right), two men who were tortured in the Blood sun dance of 1889.

785
796

Fig. 2.—An act of self-torture in the Blood sun dance of 1891. Photograph by R. N. Wilson.

[p. 169]

was always asked of the man undergoing the torture before his breasts were pierced, and the 785 796 one doing the cutting always did just the opposite of the young man's request. So when I said "thin," Red Bead knew to make his incisions deep).[3] Red Bead gave four of his own war coups. He made no prayer. Then he pierced my breasts with the sharp arrowhead and inserted a serviceberry stick through each breast. The sticks were not sharp but flattened at the ends. The other two men held my arms as he cut and inserted the sticks. Blood flowed down my chest and legs over the white paint. Then Red Bead pressed the sticks against my body with his hands. They turned me around to face the sun and pierced my back. To the skewers 785 on my back they hung an imitation shield, not 796 so heavy as a war shield. The shield had feathers on it, but I don't remember how it was 714 painted. It belonged to a man named Peninsula.

The ropes were brought out from the center pole and tied to the skewers in my breasts— 785 right side first, then left side. Red Bead then grabbed the ropes and jerked them hard twice. 796 Then he told me, "Now you go to the center pole and pray that your vow will come true." [782] I walked up there. I knew I was supposed to pretend to cry. But oh! I really cried. It hurt so much. Coming back from the center pole I was shouting. Then, before I started to dance, I jerked the shield off my back.

I leaned back and began dancing, facing the center pole. It felt just like the center pole was pulling me toward it. I began to dance from the [535] west toward the doorway of the sun lodge and back. Then, when the skewers did not break loose, the old men realized that the incisions had been made too deep. Red Bead came up and cut the outside of the incisions again so they would break loose. As I started dancing again the left side gave way and I had to continue dancing with only my right side holding. An old man named Strangling Wolf jumped up from the crowd and came toward me shouting. He called out four coups he had counted and jumped on me. The last rope gave way and I fell to the ground.

The three old men came to me and cut the rough pieces of flesh hanging from my breasts off even. They told me to take this flesh that had been trimmed off, and the sagebrush from my head, wrists, and ankles, and place them at the base of the center pole. I did as they told me.

[3] Jenness, pp. 54–5, reported the same contrariness of action on the part of the Sarcee [171] surgeon when the suppliant pleaded for a "thin" cutting.

Then I took my robe and walked out of the 785
medicine lodge alone. I went to a lonely place
and fasted for a night. I wanted to dream. But
I couldn't sleep at all because of the pain. At [782]
sunrise I prayed to the sun.

Some time after that I saw a man approaching
on horseback. He said, "I'm going to take 752
you home right away." He took me up behind
him on his horse and rode me slowly back to
camp. My breasts were swollen and hurt. The
rider's name was Red Crane. He told me of a [796]
mix-up that took place at the sun dance over
horses stolen from the Gros Ventres. [721]

When I got to my lodge, my mother gave me something to eat. She and my father told me what had happened at the sun dance gathering—a mix-up between the Mounted Police and Indians.[3] I had to stay in the lodge several days. My breasts were so swollen I could hardly move. Indian doctors used herb medicines to take the swelling away and cure my wounds.[4]

The common elements in these two accounts 785
reveal the pattern of the self-torture
experience among the Blood Indians more
clearly and completely than the brief description
of the ordeal previously published
by McLean. This experience was initiated 785
by a warrior through a vow to the celestial
deities, sun or moon (the latter in Blackfoot 726
belief was sun's wife), very shortly before 776
the man exposed himself to danger. The
vow was a simple, direct appeal to the 789
deity for protection and success in the immediate,
hazardous undertaking. In return
for such aid the petitioner promised to make 785
the self-torture sacrifice in the sun dance 796
lodge of his people. On return home after the successful exploit the pledger made known his vow to his relatives. They helped him to obtain the services of one or more older men who had been through the ordeal and were qualified, therefore, to instruct and care for the young man in the ceremonial fulfillment of his vow. The public cere-

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[3] In the summer of 1889, the Mounted Police sought to apprehend Calf Robe, a Blood horse thief, who sought sanctuary in the medicine lodge of his people. The Indians overpowered the police and set Calf Robe free, but there was no bloodshed (Steele, pp. 262-265). This incident serves to verify the year of Scraping White's and Heavy Head's torture. [127] [657]

[4] These narratives follow as closely as possible the words of the interpreter. In a few places details obtained during further questioning of the informants have been inserted. [128]

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mony took place in the sun-dance lodge, about midday of the day following the erection of the center pole. One man was tortured at a time. Each young man's experienced helper or helpers prepared him for the ordeal, pierced his breasts, inserted the wooden skewers, and attached the thongs leading from the crotch of the center pole. They guided his actions by telling him first to embrace the center pole and pray for successful fulfillment of his vow, watched him closely until he freed himself from the ropes, trimmed off the ragged edges of flesh from his breasts and instructed him to place them at the base of the center pole as an offering to the sun. With this act the vow was fulfilled.

Both informants stated that the helpers were always men well advanced in years, rather than men who had been through the torture only a few years earlier. The number of helpers depended primarily on the age of the victim and his relative's confidence in his ability to take the punishment. Younger men generally had more helpers to hold them as the incisions were made. Fasting was not considered obligatory. Scraping White said he was not required to abstain from food on the day prior to the torture. Scraping White's narrative omits mention of the painting of his body in preparation for the torture. However, Heavy Head asserted that all who underwent the torture were painted just as he had been.

Neither Scraping White nor Heavy Head took any active part in the tortures at the sun dance of 1891, the last occurrence of self-torture in the Blood ceremony. They said that four men, Calf Tail, Buckskin Tom, Old Man Owl, and Takes Paint, all now deceased, were tortured in that year. R. N. Wilson, a trader on the Blood Reserve, photographed these torture ceremonies. One of his photographs is reproduced here, through the courtesy of Archdeacon S. H. Middleton, principal of St. Paul's Residential School, on the Blood Reserve, owner of a print from the original glass plate negative. Percy Creighton believed that the Indian shown in the act of torture was Takes Paint. [127]

The Blood Indians were the last Blackfoot tribe, and probably the last tribe of

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Plains Indians to observe the self-torture 185
ceremony. After their 1891 performance of
the torture it was prohibited by the Indian 178
Department and the Mounted Police. A [657]
year earlier the North Blackfoot had been
persuaded to abandon torture (Ann. Rept.,
pp. 83-84). The Piegan eliminated torture
from their sun dances at least 20 years
earlier. Weasel Head (born about 1860), for
many years a prominent weather dancer in
the South Piegan sun dance, told the writer
before his death in 1943, that he had never
seen the torture performed in the sun dance
of his tribe, although he recalled that as a
youth he had seen older men who bore the
scars of torture. Red Plume (born ante 185
1850), informed Curtis that he had seen the
torture rites in the Piegan sun dance only 175
four times, thrice when a small boy and 178
once when a young man. Each time a
single man had submitted to the torture.
Red Plume attributed the discontinuance
of self-torture in the Piegan sun dance to
the warning of a North Piegan weather
dancer that "they would die if they gave
their bodies to the sun" (Curtis, vol. 6, p.
55). Clark Wissler (p. 262) and Walter
McClintock (p. 320) reported the persistence
of this belief among the Piegan in the
first decade of the present century.

Wissler (p. 263) believed that self-torture 185
had not become thoroughly adjusted to its
place in the Piegan sun-dance ceremony at 184
the time it was abandoned. On the other
hand, the torture appears to have found
much more favor among the neighboring
Blood Indians. McLean (p. 236), stated
that from two to five men underwent this
torture every year in the Blood sun dance.
Whereas the Piegan seem to have abandoned
torture as a result of native fear and
distaste for the ceremony, the Blood continued
to practice it until they were compelled
by Government authorities to give it
up.

Wissler (pp. 263-264) was inclined to 185
credit a Piegan tradition that the Blackfoot 177
tribes borrowed the torture ceremony from
the Arapaho. There still exist among the 171
Piegan vague but persistent traditions of a
group of Blood Indians who sojourned for a 173
number of years with the Arapaho in the
early part of the nineteenth century. Chey-

enne traditions, obtained from elderly men 785
of the Southern Cheyenne nearly half a
century ago by George Bird Grinnell and 177
George E. Hyde, tell of a group of Gros
Ventres and "Blackfeet" (division not in- 171
dicated), who joined the Cheyenne and 173
Arapaho in the Black Hills or on the Platte
about the year 1826. According to one version of this tradition the "Blackfeet" returned north a few years later (Grinnell, vol. 1, pp. 39–40). Major Culbertson, who was married to a Blood woman, is reported to have found ten lodges of Blood Indians living with the Arapaho, when he attended the Fort Laramie Treaty Council in 1851. "They were unknown to him, and he did not learn how long they had been there or whether they ever returned" (Bradley, Book A, p. 184). These data, and the fact that the Piegan were relatively indifferent to the torture in later years, suggest the possibility that the torture feature was introduced among the Blackfoot tribes by Blood Indians, who may have borrowed it from the Arapaho no earlier than the second quarter of the nineteenth century.

Spier (p. 491) regarded the self-torture as 785
a nonessential element in the sun-dance
ceremony of most Plains tribes. Our evi- 796
dence certainly supports this conclusion in- 182
sofar as the Blood sun dance is concerned. Both the torture pledger and his helpers played no necessary part in the sun-dance ceremony. They entered the medicine lodge for the sole purpose of fulfilling the pledg-
er's vow. The Blackfoot tribes have con- 796
tinued their annual sun dances to the pres-
ent day, with no apparent sense of loss of 178
any essential feature. Now as formerly the sun dance centers about the elaborate ritual prescribed for the fulfillment of the vow of the medicine woman who pledged the ceremony. Her objective was reached with the completion of the medicine lodge, the day before the tortures took place.

The Blackfoot tribes regarded the tor- 785
ture, such as was endured by Scraping
White and Heavy Head, as the most dan- 304
gerous and severe form of physical sacrifice 152
to the sun. The mutilation of the body by offerings of a finger or bits of flesh from the arms and legs were considered lesser ordeals (Wissler, pp. 263–265). Scraping White

showed the writer scars on his legs resulting 785
from the sacrifice of pieces of flesh to the
sun prior to the year of his torture experience. 304
Nevertheless, the belief of the Piegan [752]
that men who submitted to the torture
would not live long after they had given
their bodies to the sun, appears to have 785
been based upon religious fear rather than 761
the life histories of men who had been tortured. 165
Several of our elderly South Piegan
informants recalled having seen older men
of the tribe who bore the scars of the torture.
The severity of the torture varied with 785
the depth of the incisions. Older men watched the suppliant carefully, and did not permit the torture to be prolonged indefinitely. Even in the case of Heavy Head, whose experience was described by other elderly Blood Indians as the most severe punishment they had witnessed in sun-dance tortures, the performance lasted only a few minutes. His narrative indicates the pain and nervous shock must have been intense. But in the majority of cases it probably did no permanent damage to the individual. Although Scraping White and Heavy Head still bear the scars of their torture, these men appear to be in fair health, active of mind and body, nearly six decades after they expiated their vows to the sun in the Blood medicine lodge in the summer of 1889.

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[p. 172-B]

speculations unsubstantiated by cross checking, field investigation 172
of informants' descriptions, or full documentation of these informants'
background and reliability. Hoffman makes much of the theory that 114
tipi rings were used as shelters during "medicine getting" quests; 785
these fasting shelters, however, are U-shaped stone constructions 342
large enough to hold a man and high enough to protect him from the
wind. They thus cannot be confused, in the field, with tipi-ring 172
circles. Several of these fasting shelters can still be seen today, and 114
have been located on the Blackfeet Reservation. One of the best surviving examples is the shelter of Ear Rings, a Piegan, father of John Bird Earrings, who brought Claude Schaeffer, then curator of the Museum of the Plains Indian in Browning, to this shelter, placed on a hill above Ear Rings' allotment and near his grave. Dr. Schaeffer photographed the shelter at this time (pl. 53, *b*).[23]

Carling Malouf is also noncommittal on the use of tipi rings, but 172
is led to the supposition of a ceremonial function by the lack of hearths 114
and artifacts in so many.[24] Malouf's statement that ethnographic accounts fail to provide sound information on the rings is difficult to comprehend in the light of the evidence presented by informants in a previous section of this paper.

Review of their writings suggests that the hesitation of these students in assigning a domestic function to tipi rings stems from (1) lack of detailed examination and analysis of tipi rings in the field, (2) unfamiliarity with published historical and ethnographic sources and with surviving native knowledge, (3) application of interpretations based on phenomena from a limited area to a large geographical region occupied by a number of tribes representing diverse linguistic stocks, cultural traditions, and geographical connections, in which entirely foreign but superficially similar structures cause much confusion, and (4) an unwillingness to commit themselves on a seemingly controversial topic.

It should be noted, of course, that tipi rings are distributed over an area much greater than the former home of the Blackfoot, to which my conclusions are limited. In other areas and among different tribes, there may be stone circles that served other functions. The archeological past of each area is, to a greater or lesser extent, unique, and must be recognized as disclosing information perhaps inapplicable to any
other area. Therefore it is admitted that the hesitation of arche- [121]
ologists such as Mulloy may well be justified in regard to stone circles treated as a phenomenum scattered from New Mexico to Montana; the writer will maintain only that those herein described from the

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[23] Personal communication, summer of 1953.

[24] Personal letter dated November 7, 1953.

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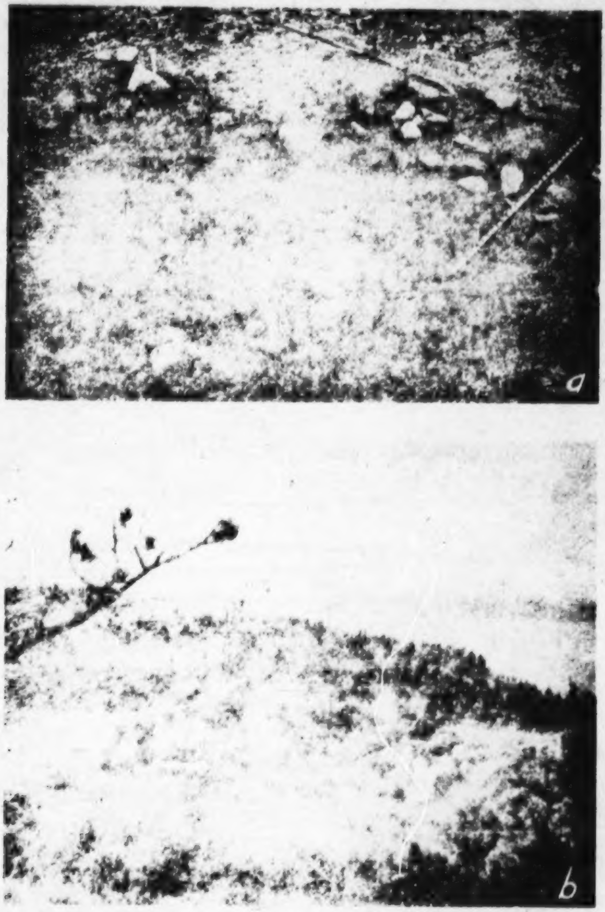

a, Site 24GL486, ring 4. Rocks in square 1L1 (upper left) displaced by blowout; square 1L2, unexcavated, shows rocks embedded in ground between excavated squares 1L1 and 2L2; rock ring hearth in foreground. *b*, Fasting shelter of Ear Rings, Earrings Hill, southeast of Starr School on the Blackfeet Indian Reservation. (Photograph taken October 1950; courtesy Claude E. Schaeffer.)

[p. 474-F]

122 never know. Ordinarily, I should have passed such an encounter
732 without undue personal involvement, but fatigue, uncertainty with
regard to the whereabouts of Jim and the Chief, and the distressing
emotional iotacism which at times plagues even the best of us, conspired
to evoke within my personal self an almost articulate resentment
that my unannounced return to the Reservation had not been
rewarded with a panorama somewhat more inspiring.

By the time I had turned off the ignition and gotten out of the
122 station wagon, I found myself being converged upon by two Indian
123 men, each from his separate abode—and neither, I soon learned,
destined to elevate my currently subterranean morale. One man was
quite young and effusively, almost obsequiously, eager to please,
and from him I learned that the Chief is very much alive indeed and
that he and Jim are over in Canada, at Gleichen, attending a Blackfoot
Sun Dance (Medicine Lodge). Damn, but I wish I were with
796 them! The Sun Dance is the very focus of Blackfoot religious ritual,
178 and it is becoming an increasingly rare episode in Indian life. Only
the very old Indians know how properly to sponsor and conduct the
[793] ceremony, and since the Holy Woman (an Indian lady, always
above any moral reproach, who makes the formal vow to the Sun)
● [785] and all the other principals must undergo a fast of four days, those
persons who are both qualified and physically able to participate in
the Sun Dance are very few indeed.

There has not been a Blackfoot Sun Dance here in the States for
several years, and I doubt seriously that there will ever again be
one. The so-called Sun Dances held by Plains Tribes other than the
Blackfoots are ersatz gestures at best and are significantly performed
796 during the height of the tourist season. These ceremonies are in the
same category as the "adoption" ceremonies—innumerable Whites
178 believe that they have been "adopted" by one Indian tribe or another—which
591 are not adoption ceremonies at all but merely name-giving
[553] ceremonies (one of which, thanks to the publicity-conscious
Great Northern Railway, can be purchased from even the Blackfoots
for fifty bucks). A true Blackfoot adoption ceremony involves
a ritual of four days duration, and it is a very serious and a rather
strenuous procedure for all parties involved. One does not properly
become adopted into the Blackfoot *tribe;* one becomes an adopted
member of a Blackfoot *family,* with all the privileges and responsibilities
attaining to true family membership. Very, very few persons
of White blood have ever been awarded this honor.

177 The Blackfoots were the last of the Western tribes to have intercourse
with the White Man, and they never had any more to do with

"That Phillip, he don't know what's, by goz!", produced some roots 122 from the mysterious interior of the Chief's room, and cut the roots (156) into small pieces and added them to a basin of hot water. Then the Indian girl bathed my ankle with a soaked cloth. The girl was pretty drunk, but her hands were unbelievably gentle. It was like being bathed by an angel.

That was four years ago, but it seems like yesterday. Today, before coming home from town, I bought a pane of glass to replace the one I broke, and Jim and I stopped at the local power company office to check on our light situation. They said they'd check the line, and by the time we got home (4:30), a maintenance crew was there to install a new transformer. So now we have lights. It is 5:45 now, and Jimmy just stuck his head out of the kitchen and said, "*Ah́k-so-yope*" (let's eat). "*Sey-kúhn-noz*" (I am hungry).

For supper we had fried chicken, and potatoes cooked in (262) beef broth. The Blackfoot word for broth is new to me, but I will have no difficulty in remembering it. The word is *kó-piss*, and brother Jim kindly suggested a most efficacious (if slightly scatological) Anglo-Saxon cognate (false cognate, of course). All I have to do is change the stress. For dessert we had canned cherries and *ah̀-siks-eh-kim-méh* (coffee).

After supper we celebrated the restoration of electrical service by (126) doing some tape recording. The Chief and Jim are still pretty much under the spell of the Sun Dance which they recently attended, 122 and from them I gained a great deal of information about the Sun 796 Dance encampment in general and the Medicine Lodge in particular. The Sun Dance this year was sponsored by a Canadian Blackfoot named Wolf Child (Mach-ku-yáy-pu-kah), and the encampment included a large number of lodges.

Among other things, I learned that although the thong torture 796 was outlawed by the Whites around the turn of the century, it 785 continued to be performed surreptitiously by the Blackfoots until at (656) least as recently as the 1920's. The thong torture is a ceremony, once quite common among the Plains Tribes, in which a young man allows skewers to be passed through the skin of his chest and attached to the Sun Dance centerpole by rawhide ropes; then the man dances, leaning backward against the ropes until his flesh tears open, releasing the skewers. The thong torture has been interpreted by some as a sort of show-off demonstration of the participant's courage, but I have found no grounds for believing that this was the case among the Blackfoots. Certainly the ordeal required both courage

Certainly the ordeal required both courage
796 and fortitude, but the Chief says, and he should know, that the
● 785 event represented the fulfilment of a vow which the participant
had made to the sun on the occasion of his requesting some special
[782] favor, such as protection in war or the recovery from illness of a
loved one. Of special interest is the fact that if the skewers did not
tear loose after a reasonable term of sincere effort by the dancer, it
was the prerogative of any respected warrior to step forth, recite
his war honors by way of qualification, and sever with a knife the
strips of flesh which bound the dancer to the thongs; whereupon
the severed flesh was given as an offering to the sun. Such a brutal
religious gesture!—almost as nutty as having yourself lashed and
wearing a hair shirt over the open wounds. Those who fast at the
[178] Sun Dance for four days take no refreshment except a small drink of
water at sunrise and sunset, and since some of the old ladies and
gentlemen are too frail to survive such an ordeal, it is now allowable
for a surrogate faster to deny himself in their stead. There is nothing
supposititious about this action; it is intended by the surrogate as a
gesture of respect to the worthy old-timers and is done in the same
spirit that the cutting of the flesh of the dancer formerly was conducted.

342 The Chief mentioned something about the Indian teepee or lodge
178 which came as a surprise to me but which I should have had sense
enough to know without being told. The old buffalo hide teepees
were much smaller than their modern canvas counterparts. Hide
weighs much more than canvas, and even though the Blackfoots
used the lighter summer hides of the buffalo, or even split the hide
to reduce its bulk, a teepee constructed of more than six or eight
hides was simply too heavy for the nomadic Blackfoots to conveniently
[492] pack around. Some wealthy families, who had many horses
and so could provide travois transportation for more worldly goods,
had larger teepees, but these had to be divided into two or more
parts because a single horse could not manage to pull the load.

342 The discussion moved on to the Blackfoot painted lodges, and
532 here we really struck paydirt. Even in the old days there were only
about four dozen painted lodges among all three tribes of the Black-
[619] foot Confederacy, and the lodges were not painted helter-skelter or
at the whim of the owner. The painted lodge was associated with a
[778] medicine bundle of some sort, and the designs painted on the lodges
[787] were either inspired by a vision that the owner had had or were
[432] purchased (the exclusive privilege of using the design, that is)
[424] from the previous owner. The Chief related the traditional origin of